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INTRODUCTION

The City of New Port Richey has declared an area in the Central Business District (CBD) and surrounding neighborhoods to be blighted, as defined in Section 163.335 Florida Statutes and is appropriate for redevelopment. This plan is intended to guide the public and private efforts that will be needed to stimulate economic development, improve structural and physical characteristics of the residential units and improve the physical characteristics and the economic activity in the downtown.

Part I of this plan will provide a historical and general overview of the existing conditions of the redevelopment area. Part II contains the goals and objectives for redevelopment. Part III presents the implementation plan, and Neighborhood Impact Analysis.

BOUNDARIES OF THE REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The following is a legal description of the Redevelopment Area.

BEGINNING at the intersection of Madison Avenue and Indiana Avenue, commence in a southerly direction along Madison Avenue to the intersection of Madison Avenue and Florida Avenue; thence easterly along Florida Avenue to the intersection of Florida Avenue and Monroe Street; thence southerly along Monroe Street to the intersection of Monroe Street and Delaware Avenue; thence westerly along Delaware Avenue to the intersection of Delaware Avenue and Franklin Street; thence northerly along Franklin Street to the intersection of Franklin Street and Montana Avenue; thence westerly along Montana Avenue approximately 720 feet to the boundary line between Lots 4 and 5, Block 103, City of New Port Richey, and continue along said boundary to the Pithlachascotee River; thence northerly across said River to Oak road; thence westerly along Oak Road to the intersection of Oak Road and U.S. 19; thence southerly along U.S. 19 approximately 200 feet; thence westerly across U.S. 19 Tract 24 for approximately 360 feet to the Corporate Limits of the City of New Port Richey; thence northerly to the north boundary of Tract 24; thence westerly along the north boundary of Tract 24 for approximately 80 feet; thence north to the west boundary of Tract 17, continuing north along the west boundary of Tract 17 to the northwest corner of Tract 17; thence easterly along the north boundary of Tract 17, continuing easterly across U.S. 19 to the west boundary of Lot 19, Block 206; thence southerly to the intersection of U.S. 19 and Bridge Road;

THENCE EASTERLY ALONG Bridge Road to the intersection of Bridge Road and Lambert Lane; thence northerly along Lambert Lane to the intersection of Lambert Lane and River Road; thence along River Road in a southeasterly direction for approximately 600 feet to the westernmost point on the boundary between Lot 20, Block 205 and Lot 1, Block 208; thence easterly along said boundary to the Pithlachascotee River; thence northerly along the meander of the Pithlachascotee River to the northernmost point of Lot 11, Block 205; thence proceed in an easterly direction across the Pithlachascotee River to the southern boundary of Sims Manor Estates, continuing easterly along said boundary across North Boulevard and thence easterly along the south boundary of Block 48 to Circle Boulevard; thence proceed along the northernmost portion of Circle Boulevard to the intersection of Central Avenue and Circle Boulevard; thence easterly along Central Avenue to the intersection of Central Avenue and Adams Street; thence northerly along Adams Street to the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Adams Street; thence northwesterly along Pennsylvania Avenue to the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Indiana Avenue; thence easterly on Indiana to the BEGINNING.

The above described area is depicted on the attached area map.

HISTORY OF THE REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The downtown of New Port Richey was developed originally in the early decades of the 1900's. Downtown New Port Richey is somewhat "younger" by comparison to other downtowns in the eastern United States. The land on which the downtown area is located was surveyed and platted in 1911 and grew mainly through the efforts of the Port Richey Land Company, which owned and developed much of the land of New Port Richey. The Port Richey Land Company began marketing the area as the "ideal retirement area" as early as 1911.

The City developed as both a retirement community and a service center for out lying farmlands, aided by the extension of railroad service and the City's proximity to the Dixie Highway. The highway, which was the major north-south route along Florida's west coast, ran through the center of the business district (the street is now known as the Boulevard).

New Port Richey enjoyed substantial growth between 1911 and Florida's real estate bust of the late 1920's. Most of the pre-1920's buildings in the downtown were of wood construction and have been destroyed by fire in the intervening years, but many structures built in the 1920's survive today and give downtown much of its present character. These buildings include the Hacienda Hotel, the Pasco Building, the former First State Bank, and the Meighan Theater.

It was at this time that New Port Richey entertained the Hollywood crowd, attracting film stars Thomas Meighan, Gloria Swanson and Ed Wynn, author Pearl Buck and many others. Representatives of Paramount Pictures came to New Port Richey to discuss the possibility of creating a motion picture studio in town. The Depression ended these plans. The decade of the 1950's saw the City's population increase from 1500 to more than 3500. The quick growth at that time increased the market area for the downtown, but it also planted the seeds for the decline of the Central Business District. The main catalyst of the decline came from the opening of the US Hwy 19 corridor.

US Highway 19 was opened in 1951, replacing Dixie Highway as the main north-south transportation artery for the Gulf Coast. Much of the corridor was unzoned county land prior to development of US 19, and the abundant acreage allowed multi-laned roads, vast parking lots, and large stores with a minimum of development regulations. Commercial development has continued to grow and flourish on US 19 over the last thirty seven (37) years and has facilitated the decline of the CBD. The predominance of the US 19 corridor has prompted significant changes in the land use and types of businesses that the downtown has been able to attract and support. The downtown has evolved from the retail focal point of Pasco County to primarily service oriented activities. While service sector types of economic activity are not

a negative aspect of the redevelopment area, the base of employment and activity must be more diversified to achieve the best results for continued "life and growth" of the downtown/redevelopment district of New Port Richey. The goal of this plan is to help achieve that "life and growth" through the redevelopment of the presently blighted downtown and nearby area. A major consideration of any type of growth or redevelopment is the financing techniques needed to pay for improvements. This plan also addresses that question.

Resource material for the historical overview was provided in great part from A PLAN FOR REVITALIZATION, prepared for the City of New Port Richey, by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

LAND USE

Single and multi-family residential units occupy the majority of land in the redevelopment area. It is anticipated that residential will continue to be a prevalent land use at the sunset of the plan. Many of the residential units are in "good" structural condition (see NPR Blight Study, 1988). In the survey that was conducted by the New Port Richey Planning Department in March and April of 1988, it was noted that many structures were showing signs of physical deterioration and lack of maintenance. It was also discovered that property values in the district were rather erratic, with some increasing, some decreasing, and some increasing in smaller increments. The area of residential use is characterized by low to moderate income households, as well as first time home buyers. Renter occupied units make up a large percentage of the residential structures in the redevelopment area. Many of the lots lack curbing, causing severe runoff into the streets, and deteriorated lots. Physically, much of the area has fallen into disrepair. The collector and internal streets that service the residential sections could benefit from a greater level of maintenance.

The redevelopment area also contains the historical downtown of New Port Richey. This area is also characterized by deteriorating conditions (see NPR Blight Study, 1988). The present condition of the downtown is a product of reduced investment in the reconstruction or maintenance of commercial use structures over the past thirty years and the inability of the downtown location to effectively compete with other more accessible and visible retail and commercial centers along the U.S. 19 corridor. The downtown of New Port Richey is similar to many of the central business districts in the nation. There is and has been a continuous outflow of people and resources for many years. This economic drain is the result of the following:

1. Deterioration: Most of the nation's deteriorated and declining neighborhoods are located in or around the central city.
2. Disinvestment: Only a fraction of the total new and private investment made each year is going to the central business district.

As a result of these trends the central business district has become increasingly dependent on federal, state, and local governmental resources to maintain the minimum quality of life. In the Central Business District of the City of New Port Richey, the trend has been similar to the national trend. The major economic/consumer attractors have moved from the Central Business District to the outlying areas along US Highway 19 and into local shopping malls. In 1986, the City of New Port Richey and local business leaders established the Community Cooperative to help promote and develop the downtown of the City. Since its inception, the Cooperative has been instrumental in revitalizing the downtown. The Co-op has applied for the Florida Main Street Program, distributed a downtown directory, and sponsored downtown events to attract people to the CBD.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

The major transportation links currently serving the redevelopment district are Main Street, Grand Boulevard, and US Highway 19. According to the New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan of 1988, the Level of Service (LOS) on these roads are as follows:

	<u>LOS</u>
MAIN STREET: Congress to US Hwy 19	C
GRAND BLVD.: CR 518 to Main Street	C
US Hwy 19: Sunset Blvd. to Gulf Dr.	E
US Hwy 19: Gulf Dr. to Main Street	D
US Hwy 19: Main Street to Northern City Limits	D

The other streets located in the redevelopment area are minor collector and internal streets and have not been addressed as far as LOS in the Comprehensive Plan. Redevelopment efforts will raise the LOS on Main Street and Grand Boulevard. To bring this LOS to the desired standard it is anticipated that the CRA will examine various alternatives to improve the traffic circulation in the redevelopment area.

ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

The Central Business District of the City of New Port Richey faces some unique development opportunities. The general physical characteristics and local amenities could project New Port Richey as the commercial focal point for West Pasco County. The Central Business District has the potential for significant increases in economic growth. This, along with the natural beauty that the Pithlachascotee River and Sims Park have to offer, can create a redevelopment opportunity that is unique in the urbanized Tampa Bay area.

The Central Business District is easily accessible to one of the most heavily traveled highways in the State of Florida. U.S. 19 and some intensive commercial uses are included in part of the redevelopment area.

At the present time, the limited availability of parking poses a significant problem to increasing the economic potential of the downtown. The City, in its adopted Comprehensive Plan, has indicated its desire to create a one-way pairing system of Main Street and Nebraska Avenue. This proposed one-way pairing system would not only decrease the level of service on the two major roads that service the redevelopment area, but would also help to create more parking. A major objective of the City's redevelopment efforts is to increase the available parking and to identify the existing parking in the downtown. This can be accomplished by improving the signage, and access to existing parking spaces as well as creating the one-way pairing system.

EMPLOYMENT
AVERAGE MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT COVERED BY
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION LAW BY MAJOR
INDUSTRY GROUP, PASCO COUNTY

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>% Increase 1970-87</u>
All Industries	54,426	43,986	13,960	290
Agri., Forestry Fishing	2,378	2,743	2,260	5
Mining	40	59	0	---
Construction	5,096	3,434	680	649
Manufacturing	4,016	3,121	1,940	
T.C.U.	2,357	1,541	660	257
Trade, Wholesale	1,246	743	2,690	
Trade, Retail	15,243	8,772	450	466
F.I.R.E	3,120	1,928	1,460	593
Services	13,489	5,823	1,860	824
Govt.	3,033	6,703	2,260	63
Other	000	000	000	
Labor Force	91,874	71,287	14,480	
Employment	86,775	66,397	8,960	
Unemployment	5101	4,890	520	
Unemployment Rate	5.6%	6.9%	3.6%	
L.F. Participation Rate	36.1%	36.8%	19.1%	

Source: State of Florida, Department of Labor and Employment
Security, Bureau of Labor Market Information

Note: Industry totals might not equal all industries because of
rounding and the use of different information collection and
reporting methods over time

As of 4/88

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

In March and April of 1988, the City of New Port Richey Planning Department conducted a "windshield" survey for structural conditions of the residential units in the redevelopment area. The structures were evaluated by external appearance only, and were classified into the following categories:

- EXCELLENT: Usually new structures or new repairs. No sign of deterioration or disrepair.
- SOUND: Showing no or little structural defects and no lack of maintainance.
- DETERIORATED: Showing structural and/or lot deterioration and defects.
- DILAPIDATED: Buildings that are showing major structural defects.

RESULTS OF STRUCTURAL CONDITION SURVEY

In the redevelopment area there are 196 residential structures. Residential units were also classified as SF (Single Family), and MF (Multi-Family) units. Duplexes, triplexes, as well as multi-unit apartments were considered as Multi-Family units. The number of each type and the percentage of the whole are listed below.

-Housing Condition-

<u>External Condition</u>	<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Excellent	0	0
Sound	110	56
Deteriorated	86	44
Dilapidated	0	0

-Types of Residential Structures-

<u>Housing Type</u>		
Single-Family	129	65
Multi-Family	67	35

Overall Goal

TO ESTABLISH THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS AS THE FOCAL POINT FOR THE COMMUNITY BY IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES, STIMULATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INCREASING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DOWNTOWN.

Land Use Goals

To encourage a land use mix which supports a diversified economic base.

To maintain the growth of the office, service, financial, entertainment, and governmental uses in the downtown.

To increase the intensity of development and businesses within the downtown.

To promote the development projects that further the downtown and residential goals, by assisting the identification of sites, acquisition of permits and appropriate financing.

To increase the visibility, identity and unity of the downtown through promotion and improved signage.

To develop building codes that address the special problems associated with the redevelopment of the older structures.

Housing

To encourage a variety of housing types and housing costs within the redevelopment area.

To help provide for a standard of living that eliminates unsanitary and deteriorating conditions.

To build sidewalks within the redevelopment neighborhoods.

To install curbing in areas that presently lack curbs.

Environment

To enhance the visual attractiveness of the downtown through landscape features, pedestrian-scale lighting and street furniture.

To increase the safety of the neighborhoods by adding street lighting where needed.

To condemn blighted structures and improve the appearance of lots.

Environment Cont.

To improve street maintenance.

To encourage building improvements by property owners.

To preserve the natural tree cover that still exists within the redevelopment area.

To provide shade trees and other canopy features in the redevelopment area.

Transportation

To provide an integrated system of conveniently located, visible, and readily accessible parking.

To establish a safe, comfortable and inviting pedestrian circulation system within the redevelopment area.

To improve handicapped accessibility, short-term parking, and daily storage for bicycles.

LAND USE ELEMENT

GOAL I

TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT WILL EVOLVE INTO A MORE DYNAMIC OFFICE, SERVICE, FINANCIAL, ENTERTAINMENT AND GOVERNMENTAL DISTRICT WITH INCREASED SPECIALTY SHOPS AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Encourage a land use mix which supports a diversified economic base.

* POLICY 1.1.1

The implementation of land development regulations which encourage and permit a mixed use in structure.

* °

The CRA will encourage implementation of zoning classification which promotes commercial on lower floors and residential units on ground levels in a single structure.

* POLICY 1.1.2

The implementation of land development regulations which encourage the clustering of like commercial activity.

* °

The CRA will explore the feasibility of a retail complex.

* °

The CRA will encourage the increased development of office related uses.

MEASURE

A diversified economic base.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

Increase and maintain the growth of the office, service, financial, entertainment, and governmental uses of the central business district.

* POLICY 1.2.1

The CRA will implement incentives for the preservation and or redevelopment of the downtown business district consistent with existing commercial use.

* POLICY 1.2.2

The CRA will offer and implement incentives to attract consumer and pedestrian oriented commercial activity.

* POLICY 1.2.3

The CRA shall strive to enhance the retail components of the downtown through the attraction of complimentary retail activity and uses.

MEASURE

Development/Redevelopment in CBD

HOUSING ELEMENT

- GOAL I TO ASSIST IN THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE, DECENT, SAFE AND SANITARY HOUSING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PRESENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS IN THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA, FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE OF RACE, SEX, HANDICAP, AGE, ETHNIC BACKGROUND, MARITAL STATUS OR HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION.
- OBJECTIVE 1.1 To help provide for a standard of living that eliminates unsanitary and or unhealthy living conditions as provided for in the Comprehensive Plan.
- POLICY 1.1.1 The CRA shall assist the City, as an ongoing policy, to eliminate any substandard housing conditions that exist in the redevelopment area.
- POLICY 1.1.2 The CRA will notify the City whenever unsanitary and/or unhealthy living conditions are discovered.
- POLICY 1.1.3 The City will staff a minimum housing inspector.
- POLICY 1.1.4 The CRA shall encourage the City to pursue federal and state sources of funding for housing improvement projects.
- POLICY 1.1.5 The CRA will encourage and assist the homeowner to participate in housing improvement projects.
- MEASURE Elimination of substandard and or unhealthy living conditions.
- OBJECTIVE 1.2 To provide for housing opportunities free from discrimination because of race, sex, age, handicapped, ethnic background, marital status, or any other reason, as provided for in the Comprehensive Plan.
- MEASURE Absence of discrimination in the redevelopment district.
- Open housing ordinance.

OBJECTIVE 1.3 To assist in the provision of affordable and decent housing, as provided for in the Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY 1.3.1 The CRA shall encourage the City to pursue federal and state sources of funding for low and moderate income family housing opportunities in the designated redevelopment area.

POLICY 1.3.2 The City shall offer incentives to developers who will provide housing opportunities for low and moderate income families and individuals that include, but are not limited to the following:

- The State of Florida's Community Contribution Tax Credit.
- Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit.
- State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program.
- Housing Trust Funds

POLICY 1.3.3 The CRA will encourage and facilitate the involvement of non-profit groups and organizations to assist in the provision and improvement of housing opportunities in the designated redevelopment area.

MEASURE The provision of affordable, decent housing opportunities.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT/STREET SCAPING ELEMENT

- GOAL I TO ENCHANCE THE VISUAL ATTRACTIVENESS AND NATURAL AMENITIES OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA.
- OBJECTIVE 1.1 To eliminate blighted and deteriorating structures.
- POLICY 1.1.1 The CRA will notify the City whenever substandard and deteriorating structures are encountered.
- POLICY 1.1.2 The CRA shall encourage building improvement projects.
- POLICY 1.1.3 The CRA shall assist in the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant structures through technical and economic assistance programs.
- OBJECTIVE 1.2 To maintain and increase the natural amenities in the redevelopment district and to preserve the indigenous, and existing tree cover that exists in the downtown.
- POLICY 1.2.1 As an ongoing policy the CRA shall encourage the planting of new trees, ~~and~~ creation of a city landscape ordinance, *and a city landscape ordinance shall be adopted.*
- OBJECTIVE 1.3 Upon approval by the City Council, The CRA will initiate a comprehensive street scaping plan. The streetscape plan will at a minimum address the following criteria:

- The underground installation of all utility lines where it is economically feasible.
- Trees of suitable variety as designated by the CRA to be placed as a median on West Main Street. (West of the Main Street Bridge).
- Street furniture of suitable design as designated by the CRA.
- Decorative sidewalks in downtown and other areas of the redevelopment area, as designated by the CRA.
- Trees and other canopy features to be placed in appropriate locations as deemed necessary by the CRA.
- Pedestrian street lighting will be provided in appropriate areas in the redevelopment area as designated by the CRA.
- Drinking fountains will be placed in the redevelopment area, as designated by the CRA.

POLICY 1.3.1 Native vegetation throughout the redevelopment area will be encouraged.

POLICY 1.3.3 The CRA will promote incentives for innovative design techniques to allow for maximum greenspace in development and redevelopment projects in the redevelopment area.

POLICY 1.3.4 The CRA shall explore the feasibility for installation of permeable parking surfaces in all public parking lots.

POLICY 1.3.5 The CRA and City shall offer incentives which include but are not limited to Historic Trust funds pursuant to Section 267.0617 F.S. for development projects that address the following architectural guidelines:

- Rehabilitation of the older, historically significant buildings in the downtown (CBD).

- ° Adapt new building designs to be consistent with older historically significant structures.
- POLICY 1.3.6 The City will adopt a historic preservation ordinance by 1990.
- POLICY 1.3.7 The CRA shall develop special signage guidelines for the redevelopment district.
- MEASURE Improvement of the natural and physical amenities of the redevelopment district.
- OBJECTIVE 1.4 As an ongoing objective, the traffic circulation system shall emphasize safety and aesthetics, as provided for in the Comprehensive Plan.
- POLICY 1.4.1 The City shall enforce the signage requirements as set forth in the land development regulations of the City of New Port Richey.
- POLICY 1.4.2 The City shall clearly post and maintain street signage to designate public parking facilities, as provided for in the Comprehensive Plan.
- POLICY 1.4.3 The City shall provide crosswalks in the redevelopment district where deemed appropriate.
- POLICY 1.4.4 The City shall provide an efficient and easily accessible transportation system for handicapped individuals to the downtown and other areas of the redevelopment district in the design of the streetscape plan.
- POLICY 1.4.5 The City shall implement the streetscape plan as soon as it is financially feasible.
- POLICY 1.4.6 The City will provide for the repaving of roads in the redevelopment area as deemed necessary by the CRA.
- MEASURE Efficient and safe pedestrian and vehicular transportation system.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

GOAL I THE CRA SHALL STRIVE TO INCREASE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT.

OBJECTIVE 1.1 The CRA shall act as an advocate for the development projects that further the downtown goals.

* POLICY 1.1.1 The CRA will assist in the identification of suitable sites in the redevelopment area for projects that further the goals of this Central Redevelopment Plan.

* POLICY 1.1.2 The CRA will assist the developer in obtaining the appropriate building permits for development or redevelopment of the Central Business District by the following methods:

* POLICY 1.1.3 The CRA will encourage and assist the developer in obtaining the appropriate financing for development and redevelopment in the district.

MEASURE New development and/or redevelopment in the Central Business District.

POLICY 1.1.4. The CRA shall promote the Central Business District by, but not limited to the following:

- * * * ° The CRA shall sponsor downtown events.
- * ° The CRA shall actively recruit potential developers to develop projects consistent with the Goals, Objectives and Policies of this redevelopment plan.
- * ° The CRA shall actively recruit businesses to locate in the downtown.

OBJECTIVE 1.2 To increase the visibility, identity and unity of the Central Business District.

* POLICY 1.2.1 Provision of tax incentives and financial benefits to merchants in downtown.

* POLICY 1.2.2 Creation of a Florida Enterprise Zone.

MEASURE Creation of a Florida Enterprise Zone and increased employment opportunities and commercial development in the Central Business District.

IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENTS

In compliance with Section 163.360 (2) (a), Florida Statutes, the Community Redevelopment Plan conforms to the City of New Port Richey 1990-1995 Comprehensive Plan, as prepared by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council under the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act (The "Act") of 1985.

LAND USE

In compliance with the Future Land Use Map, as prepared by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, and adopted by the City of New Port Richey there have been a variety of land use opportunities identified within the redevelopment district. It is a goal of the redevelopment plan to identify land uses for designated areas as a means of implementing a program for public and private investment in accordance with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the Redevelopment Plan.

Six (6) land use classifications and the areas most suitable for those uses are as follows:

- 1) Highway Commercial
- 2) Downtown
- 3) Residential Office
- 4) Low-Medium Density Residential (0-10 units/acre)
- 5) Public/Semi-Public
- 6) Recreation/Open Space

The largest area designated for a specific land use is the Downtown Land Use category. In accordance with the "Act", the City is drafting land development regulations to implement the goals and objectives of its adopted comprehensive plan and the goals and objectives of this redevelopment plan. The Downtown Land Use category is a mixed use designation with significant development opportunities. It presently contains most of the entertainment and commercial establishments in the redevelopment area. The Public/Semi-Public land use category is also located within the Downtown Land Use category. The land use category of Low-Medium Density Residential encompasses the second largest amount of land in the areas designated for redevelopment. This is an area characterized by mostly small single-family homes. A major component of revitalization of a depressed CBD is the intensification of residential development in and around the downtown core. Because of this, residential uses are encouraged in areas designated as CBD.

A unique and aesthetically pleasing component of the redevelopment district is Sims Park and Orange Lake, both of which are located in the heart of the CBD.

The most land intensive area which is designated to a land use category is the Highway Commercial. As it implies, this is located along the U.S. 19 corridor.

The major economic activities existing in the downtown at the present time include government, entertainment/restaurant, legal and financial office use, and engineering and architectural services, with several retail and service establishments dispersed throughout the Central Business District. In addition, single and multi-family housing is located on the fringes of the downtown.

The largest area of residential use is located adjacent to the downtown. At the present the densities range from single-family to multi-family units. This plan does not call for the abolition or large increases of residential land uses. It does however, allow for increased residential opportunities in the Central Business District through implementation of this plan.

It is the intent of this plan to help the downtown evolve into a vibrant and exciting place. A mixed use of residential and office/commercial establishments will help achieve this goal.

The Highway Commercial Land Use is located primarily along US Hwy 19. This land use allows for and encourages intensive commercial development along one of the most heavily traveled corridors in Pasco County. The Redevelopment Plan encourages development to continue along these lines.

In the eastern corner of the redevelopment district, the Residential Office land use category is located. This is an area in transition due to the pressures for growth and development along the major arterials in the City. This land use will give the occupant the choice of either residing or operating light commercial services out of these units, or a combination of the two.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The redevelopment district presently contains approximately fourteen (14) acres of open space and recreation areas. Additional land acquisition is encouraged. One effective alternative method for continuing to meet the recreational needs of the redevelopment area, and the community at large is through the purchase of the property which will be dedicated to recreation and open space.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The transportation system is a combination of numerous interacting factors. Parking has direct relationship to traffic circulation. Parking is also influenced by the various modes of transportation. Since much of the transportation system is interrelated with other aspects of the redevelopment of the district, only major transportation patterns will be discussed.

A major problem and concern for the redevelopment area is the amount of traffic on Main Street, and its effect on the downtown. Two alternatives are presently under consideration to bring the LOS on Main Street to the desired standard. One alternative is to eliminate street parking and use the entire right-of-way to create four (4) lanes of traffic in each direction. This plan is not the most cost effective due to constrained facilities and the need to purchase the right-of-way on this street. A second solution is creating a one-way pairing system through the downtown. This would allow for a more efficient flow of traffic and bring the LOS to the desired standard, D. Another reason and perhaps just as important to the growth of the downtown, for the one-way pairing is that it will create more accessible parking on Main Street. The City in its adoption of its Comprehensive Plan has chosen the pairing system to address the LOS problem.

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

An important part in the achievement of the goals and objectives of this plan is the completion of development and redevelopment projects. Most of these will be sponsored or initiated by the Community Redevelopment Agency.

* Parking Improvements and Creation of New Parking

To fully take advantage of the economic potential of the Central Business district of New Port Richey, the CRA and the City should consider substantially increasing the parking opportunities in the CBD. It is recommended that all the departments in the City along with the CRA should review the areas in the redevelopment district for appropriate locations for construction of new parking facilities, or the expansion of existing facilities. The CRA should work with other governmental bodies such as the Metropolitan Planning Organization, in conducting surveys, questionnaires, etc. in order to gather accurate data to base future recommendations concerning changes in existing parking or the creation of new parking. The CRA should also work with private sector groups in an effort to provide additional parking for downtown, possibly through a public/private partnership or totally private sector construction and operation.

Streetscape Plan

Streetscape ideas and plans have been considered in New Port Richey as early as 1977 by the City staff, interested individuals and the University of Florida Landscape Architecture School.

The basic purpose of the Streetscape Plan is to develop the downtown into a more pedestrian-friendly area by enhancing its visual attractiveness through increased landscaped features, new street furniture including seating and trash receptacles, traffic control devices. The Plan strives to preserve the natural tree cover and to provide additional canopy features. In addition, the Plan encourages a parking system that will provide more integrated system of conveniently located, visible and readily accessible off-street and on-street parking.

A major goal of the Streetscape Plan is to improve the image of the downtown. It intends to make the CBD more identifiable. With the use of trees, signage, lighting, pedestrian walkways, and street furniture, the hope is that visitors and residents alike will be able to consider the downtown a unique and inviting area of the City and Pasco County at large.

Air Rights

The City of New Port Richey and the CRA should consider offering for development on a lease basis the "air space" above its City owned parking lots.

Air Rights development has been utilized in many cities in the United States, particularly where little open space is remaining in the CBD where projected and demanded growth are continuing.

The City Council and the CRA reserve the right to amend the list of proposed uses upon receipt of a proposal from a developer which differs from the list under the following criteria:

- (a) The nature of the project and its overall impact and benefit to the Redevelopment area.
- (b) Demonstrated ability of the developer to obtain financing.
- (c) Experience of the developer.

Proposal Review Procedure:

1. The CRA will receive all proposals.
2. The CRA will review all proposals received by developers and submit a recommendation on each to the City Council whether the recommendation is positive or negative.
3. If the recommendation on the proposed development is positive, the CRA will recommend that the City pursue the project, by obtaining an appraisal of the subject property and air rights over it.
4. The developer must submit a deposit to secure the total cost of the appraisal should the project not go through.
5. Upon receipt of the appraisal and agreement by the CRA, and the developer, the CRA will negotiate lease terms with the developer.
6. The negotiated lease terms will be submitted to the City Council and the City Attorney for final approval.

Developers wishing to build on the ground level of a public parking lot would be required to replace, as a minimum an equal number of public parking spaces at ground or second level.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

As a component in stimulating new residential development, the CRA should encourage multi-family townhouse type projects in any area that is in the redevelopment district, and is compatible with existing MF Zoning Classifications.

The CRA should also consider purchasing property which is zoned for multi-family usage in the redevelopment district and selling the property for multi-family units with an appropriate design as designated by the CRA. In addition, the CRA should encourage and facilitate residential units to be located over existing commercial structures in the CED.

SPECIALITY RETAIL COMPLEX

Increased retail trade is important for a stronger, diversified downtown economic base. It is also important in sustaining the downtown as a pedestrian-oriented district with activity throughout the day and evening.

While intensified use of existing retail space is important, the creation of a new specialty retail and/or restaurant complex would spark interest and investment in the downtown as a shopping area. The CRA should pursue the development of such an area.

The CRA should initiate the development of a retail complex by preparing preliminary development information (incl. site information, market overview, appropriate types of retail shops etc.), soliciting developer proposals, and establishing appropriate terms of sale or lease. An integral part of its role must be to guide complimentary support efforts, incl. the following: (1) Provision of parking (2) Renovation of nearby structures, (3) Solicitation of tenants, (4) Promotional and other management activities for the downtown district as a whole.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Implementation of housing opportunities for all income groups requires financing programs. The CRA should consider incorporating the following programs to achieve this goal:

State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program:

Approved by the Florida Legislature in 1988, The SAIL program provides very low interest second mortgages for affordable rental housing. Developers of such apartment units can obtain mortgages to meet up to 25% of the development cost.

The State of Florida's Community Contribution Tax Credit:

Since 1980, the corporations which pay corporate income tax to the state can receive a 50% tax credit for contributions made to community

development efforts. Either money or land may be donated to promote construction of affordable housing projects. For instance, if a developer were to donate land with an appraised value of \$5000, the development organization would be able to receive a \$2500 tax credit if the land were donated to a non-profit development organization or local government for the purpose of affordable housing.

Housing Trust Funds:

The City Council could create a housing trust fund funded by increases in property tax revenues created by new development and redevelopment projects. Money collected could be used for making low interest loans in a community redevelopment area.

Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit:

As part of the 1986 Tax Reform Act, tax credits for equity investment in low income rental housing are made possible to allow construction of affordable rental units for families earning less than 60% of a community's median income. An equity investor may earn a return rate of 15 to 20% on a Low Income Housing Tax Credit project.

Office Development

In addition to the development of a specialty retail complex and additional residential development downtown, increased office space development should also be encouraged by the CRA through new construction or adaptive reuse of existing structures.

The CRA should pursue with private sector interests in a timely fashion and prepare and provide preliminary development information to interested parties, show potential sites, negotiate with property owners (re: terms of lease or sale and act as liaison with the City when necessary).

The CRA'S role in providing complementary support efforts could include assistance with the provision of parking, renovation of nearby structures, necessary public improvements, solicitation of tenants, and promotional and/or management activities when deemed necessary.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

At the present time, there are a number of factors which are limiting the potential for large scale redevelopment activity in the downtown. Besides the deterioration of many of the individual structures, the present infrastructure is inadequate in its capacity to provide an acceptable standard of water and wastewater service for the expected redevelopment. Listed below is a capital improvements program which addresses some of the issues needed to bring the water and wastewater service to the desired standard.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

<u>NO.</u>	<u>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>PROJECTED COSTS</u>
1.	WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS		
a.	2,500 lineal feet, 16 inch distribution main, Main Street (S. Blvd. to U.S. 19)	90/91	\$128,000
b.	1,330 lineal feet, 16 inch distribution main, Main Street (Madison Street to S. Blvd.)	90/91	66,000
c.	River Crossing distribution mains	90/91	125,000
2.	WASTEWATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS		
a.	1,150 lineal feet, 8 inch gravity sewer, S. Blvd. (Delaware Avenue to Nebraska Avenue.).	90/91	125,000

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES

The CRA is the primary agent for guiding the redevelopment program contained in this plan. To carry out its program, the CRA will work with the City Council, the Staff of the City of New Port Richey, County and State governing bodies, the City Planning Board, and several other agencies and groups whose decisions affect the downtown. The CRA will also work to encourage involvement of the private sector in the downtown. The success of the plan will depend on the combined efforts of the public and private sectors.

The powers and responsibilities of the CRA are conveyed by the City Resolution No. 88-26, and are in accordance with Section 163.370 of the State Community Redevelopment Act of 1969. The City Council specifically retains certain power stated in Section 163.358 of the Community Redevelopment Act. These powers are:

- 1) To determine an area to be blighted, designate it for redevelopment, and hold public hearings concerning it;
- 2) To grant approval of the plan and modifications to it;
- 3) To authorize the issuance of revenue bonds;
- 4) To approve acquisition, demolition, removal or disposal of property;
- 5) To acquire property by condemnation;
- 6) To close, vacate, plan or replan streets and sidewalks and to plan or replan any part of the municipality;
- 7) To approve changes in the zoning or land use of the CED.

The need for a comprehensive approach to downtown redevelopment cannot be emphasized enough. It is the responsibility of the CRA to oversee such an approach. At the same time, this comprehensive effort must be phased over time. The CRA should concentrate on certain key projects, and intensify the effectiveness of those projects by encouraging complementary improvements, management, promotion, and additional development.

The major task of the CRA is to encourage new investment in the form of new construction, renovation, and intensified use of existing facilities, and to strengthen the economic base of the downtown. Two major ways for the CRA to achieve this task are to solicit new development and tenants and to encourage physical improvements and increased use of existing facilities.

Soliciting New Development

The following criteria should be considered in determining what kinds of developments should be sought:

- 1) The development should appear economically viable in a downtown location.
- 2) The development should contribute to a diverse and healthy economy.
- 3) Structures should be pedestrian-oriented and related to the character of the surrounding area rather than isolated structures.
- 4) The development should attract people to the downtown.
- 5) Projects able to preserve and reuse significant older buildings should be encouraged.

To carry out its task, the CRA must play an active role in soliciting and facilitating development. This includes acting as a advocate for selected projects at the local level. The CRA is positioned and empowered to seek and advocate the location of downtown projects that further the goals and visions of downtown redevelopment.

Soliciting Developers or Tenants For Undesignated Parcels:

The CRA should monitor development opportunities and solicit or encourage appropriate developments on an opportunistic basis. The CRA should in appropriate cases solicit developments or respond to request for assistance by helping identify sites and provide information about parcel ownership, building codes and other restrictions, the permitting process, and the availability of financing.

In case of a particularly significant and appropriate development opportunity, it is possible for the CRA to recommend amendment of the plan to allow land acquisition or other public assistance in order to facilitate the development.

- 1) Air Rights: The CRA should explore the opportunities and appropriate procedures and term for lease of air rights on City owned property. Selection of development proposals using air rights should be in accordance with the land use proposals, goals and objectives, and development criteria of this plan.
- 2) The use of air rights may increase construction

cost because it may require a higher-story building than would otherwise be necessary. This may prove important with regard to residential development. The City may wish to institute variable leasing terms for different kinds of development with lower rates for residential proposals in order to make them financially viable.

- 3) Sale of City properties. An alternative approach for the development of City lands is to sell lots and have the displaced parking provided in a structure either on the lot or on another site. This possibility offers greater flexibility in the use of a lot and may be attractive for residential development.

Encouraging Physical Improvements and Increased Use of Existing Facilities

The CRA will have the responsibility to encourage investment that will enhance the quality of the downtown and contribute to the redevelopment goals and objectives. An integral part of promoting the downtown is through physical improvements to the existing downtown structures.

The following sections provide policies for encouraging design and renovation in accordance with redevelopment goals.

A. Development Projects Sponsored By The CRA

For the projects that the CRA sponsors, certain design guidelines should be established. They should concern such things as pedestrian orientation, signage, parking and compatibility with the surrounding area. Broad guidelines should be imposed beforehand and considered in the review of development proposals. Certain restrictions could be included as restrictive covenants in the sale or lease of land.

The CRA should consult with City Staff and, if necessary, outside consultants to develop design guidelines and restrictions. Based on the level of development activity, it may be advantageous to form a design review board. This board may aid in reviewing specific developer proposals.

B. Renovation Requirements For Selected Areas

Renovation of some downtown buildings has already been done, and it is likely to continue even without special efforts by the CRA. The problem is to encourage renovation on a more encompassing basis.

The CRA should establish mandatory facade standards for selected areas in the downtown. Areas for this facade treatment should meet some or all of the following criteria:

- 1) Contain historically significant or contributing buildings;
- 2) Adjacent to streetscape or other major public improvements
- 3) Include interested merchants or property owners.

These criteria should aid in selecting areas where facade renovation will increase the impact or other improvements and encourage the upgrading of surrounding properties and where renovation efforts are likely to result in increased building value, sales volume, or intensified use.

Purely voluntary programs tend to be ineffective without strong incentives. The CRA should offer financial incentives to merchants/property owners who fall in the above criteria range. The Community Redevelopment Act provides that redevelopment agencies may carry out programs of voluntary or compulsory repair and rehabilitation. A coordinated effort in certain blocks is needed to change public and developers perception of the area. A few nonparticipants in a voluntary program can negate the impression of change and at the same time benefit from their neighbors efforts without making any contribution themselves.

Financial Assistance to Businesses

Revitalization of the retail business downtown requires financing. The CRA should consider ways of assisting renovating or expanding businesses to obtain financing and providing loan packaging assistance.

Management Functions

To support and increase the impact of many individual redevelopment efforts, a management capacity will be needed. Such tasks as promotion, improving security, recruiting new businesses, and ensuring a well maintained environment are important supports to a reinvestment program. These elements are particularly important in support of an expanded retail sector. ~~The CRA should work with the Community-Cooperative of the City of New Port Richey in the promotion of the downtown and in the organization of downtown events that will continue to attract consumers into the downtown.~~

Building and Structural Limitations

All new development must strictly follow local zoning ordinances on height restrictions and building size. According to the New Port Richey's Code of Ordinances, 1988 height limitations in all commercial districts must not be in excess of five (5) stories in height.

Administrative Policies

Revitalization of the redevelopment district will be carried out pursuant to this plan and the requirements of applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances and regulations. Conformance of this plan with the Comprehensive Plan is required. By adoption of the plan, the City of New Port Richey, and the CRA will begin to implement it in accordance with all applicable laws and regulation related to land purchase and sale, rehabilitation procedures, etc. Specific guidelines for use in site plan review may be developed, and restrictive covenants will be prepared for properties that are sold by the City.

Amendments to this plan can be made after public hearing in accordance with Section 163.361 of the Community Redevelopment Act. In particular, amendments would be necessary to add programs not anticipated in this plan, to delete programs required by the plan, or to approve land acquisition requiring relocation of residents.

The CRA is required by Section 163.356 of the Community Redevelopment Act to submit a annual report of its activities to the City Council and the State Auditor General. A review of the plan and implementation programs should be made no later than the end of the fifth year to determine the need for an update of the plan.

While a successful redevelopment effort is a comprehensive process, it should be accomplished in phases of development. The City of New Port Richey should adopt the following program for redevelopment:

PHASE I:

A review of existing City, County and State plans regarding proposed transportation improvements. This review should result in identification of immediate short and long range projects affecting traffic flow, parking and circulation through the downtown.

In reviewing alternative engineering solutions, alternatives must be examined that would provide for no increase in the speed of vehicles along Main Street, provide an increase of on-street parking within the Central Business District, eliminate any existing backlog of vehicles at various intersections in the Central Business District.

Phase I should also include the review of information regarding the water supply, wastewater collection, and stormwater collection systems in the downtown area. This review should result in the recommendation of specific capital improvement projects designed to accommodate future service levels in the redevelopment area.

PHASE II:

Phase II should incorporate a preliminary design and cost estimate for the traffic engineering projects envisioned in the redevelopment area. Design and construction cost estimates for underground utility replacements/improvements should be provided. The preliminary design work will include a total street system, involving sidewalks, landscaping, street lighting, and other functional, as well as ornamental design features.

PHASE III:

Following Phase II, a final design for construction improvements and documents to obtain competitive bids for capital improvements will be prepared.

Following the above, construction will begin on the selected capital improvements which incorporate, but not limited to the recommendations derived from phase II.

PHASE IV:

After the Capital improvements are completed, the City will then begin to incorporate the Implementation Policies of this plan.

The redevelopment plan and projects shall continue until it has been determined that the redevelopment efforts are complete, or otherwise discontinued at the discretion of the City Council. All funding and redevelopment projects will continue for no longer than thirty (30) years.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT ANALYSIS

In accordance with F.S. chapter 163.362, a neighborhood impact analysis has been included in this plan. The impact on area residents of any governmental project must be understood prior to any redevelopment project. The redevelopment area is characterized by a mixed land use, and contains residential opportunities for low and moderate income families. A maintenance of opportunities for low and moderate income families as well as a continued pledge for higher income groups is also a major part of this plan. The impact on residential areas is a consideration that must be included in the decision-making process to ensure a complete understanding of the personal effects of any course of action or plan implementation.

RELOCATION

No relocation or displacement of area residents is anticipated by the adoption of this plan. However, should relocation of area residents be needed, a relocation plan will be adopted.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

The major transportation routes currently serving the blighted area are Main Street, Grand Boulevard and US Highway 19. There are no residential units along US Highway 19. The implementation of the

Comprehensive Plan for the City of New Port Richey calls for the one-way pairing of Main Street and Nebraska Avenue. This new one-way pairing system will allow for an improved level of service on all roads in the redevelopment district, as well as opening up new economic potential for the downtown merchants. The pairing system will allow and facilitate the gradual spread of the Central Business District and increase the economic base of the redevelopment district and ultimately the entire community. The reduction of traffic flows off Main Street will create a pedestrian friendly Central Business District and increase the growth potential as well. The redevelopment plan does not call for a redirection or arrangement of internal or secondary streets that service the neighborhoods in the redevelopment district. It is anticipated that the redirection of Main and Nebraska will also decrease the ADT through the targeted redevelopment neighborhoods and increase the safety for families.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

An overall goal of this plan is to implement a program that will enhance the quality of life in the presently blighted areas of the City. The Streetscape plan, as well as changes in the transportation system, are designed to promote and achieve an improvement in the overall quality of life in the redevelopment district. Redirection of transportation and reduction in traffic congestion are anticipated to reduce both noise and pollution levels in the neighborhoods and Central Business District. The establishment of a pedestrian oriented environment in the downtown core is expected to result in considerable improvement of the aesthetic qualities of the downtown and the economic and physical well-being of the built environment. Through a coordinated traffic circulation system, provision of appropriately located and adequately identified parking, and improvement in the streetscape environment, incentives are provided to the private sector to improve deteriorated buildings and provide economic and social opportunities that are not presently available. It is not anticipated that any elements of the plan will have a detrimental impact on the environmental quality of life in the redevelopment district.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The level of service and facilities are expected to improve by the end of the redevelopment efforts. A number of specific projects are recommended by the staff for this plan. They include, but are not limited to:

1. A streetscape program which will provide a broad range of pedestrian oriented as well as vehicular opportunities.
2. Transportation improvements.
3. A program to reduce or eliminate overhead wiring and utilities.

4. Expanded activities and accessibility to Sims Park.
5. Additional open space and seating along Main Street and the Boulevard.

With the new City Hall/Library Complex at the eastern end of the redevelopment district, and the unique opportunities offered by Sims Park, the Central Business District will once again be the focal point of the City as well as the premiere municipality to shop, conduct business and live in Pasco County.

SCHOOL AGE POPULATIONS

The redevelopment area is presently serviced by the following schools:

Richey Elementry, Gulf Middle School and Gulf High School.

It is anticipated that the redevelopment efforts will not have a significant impact on school age populations.

HOUSING REHABILITATION

The redevelopment plan will bring not only physical improvements to the area, but it will increase attention to it as a viable and attractive residential environment and specific residential development projects proposed in the plan are expected to arrest the present population decline and lack of investment. These changes will in turn encourage the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock in the redevelopment district. Rehabilitation will be privately undertaken for the most part. New residential construction and major renovation along with incentives offered by grants should introduce mixed priced residential units in the redevelopment district. The City of New Port Richey along with the City of Zephyrhills have applied for and received an \$81,000 Rental Rehabilitation Grant from HUD to rehabilitate dwelling units for low income families. The target area for this grant is contained in the redevelopment district. It is anticipated that this rehabilitation program will further increase and improve the standard of living for residents in the presently blighted areas.

FUNDING SOURCES

Successful redevelopment efforts are naturally tied to the availability of adequate funding. In order to implement this plan, sufficient financial resources are required. There are a variety of ways to approach the issue of federal, state, and local resources. The ultimate combination of funding resources will be determined by the availability and criteria requirements of the various funding sources.

It is interesting to note that federal funding has historically provided the majority of support for redevelopment projects. This phenomenon has its roots in the massive urban renewal movement which began as a result of federal legislation in 1949. The ability of cities to rely on their source of funding has been declining during the current administration, with the elimination of the urban renewal program and the altered intent of the Community Development Block Grant program. The constant flux of current federal fiscal policies increases the difficulty in delineating the availability of programs and their funding levels for an extended time period. This is further complicated by the inequities between the money authorized for a particular program and the money which is ultimately appropriated. The consequences of this trend are important; the competition for appropriated federal money increased as did the reliance on state and local resources. Because of these conditions, the need for an open information flow with the federal government increases. To maximize all avenues of financial resources it is important to explore all possibilities.

State financial assistance for downtown redevelopment exists in several indirect forms. These include enabling legislation and tax credits. Enabling legislation gives municipalities the authority to do a number of things which can be used for community redevelopment: these include tax increment financing, issuing qualified redevelopment bonds and issuing revenue bonds. In addition there are three tax credits, which the state legislature enacted and which related directly to community redevelopment.

Local financial resources are largely the methods that municipalities choose for redevelopment programs. These funding sources are available through enabling legislation. The State's only function in this area is the actual delegation of power to the municipality to institute particular programs. The Community Redevelopment Agency has indicated its intent to utilize tax increment financing as a major source of funding for redevelopment in the presently blighted areas of the City.

FEDERAL FUNDING

1. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers several programs in the form of project grants, direct loans, and guaranteed loans. The following includes applicable programs which have been designated for further funding.

- a) Community Development Block Grants: This program is based on an entitlement formula and is set up to provide assistance to facilitate decent, sanitary housing, suitable living environment and opportunities for low and moderate income families and minorities. This program evolved out of the former categorical grant programs and instead of being earmarked for a specific type of urban improvement can be used in a variety of ways. Some of these include the acquisition or construction of certain public works, facilities, improvements, clearance or rehabilitation of substandard structures. CDBG monies are directed into "target areas" and/or "target groups". At the present time the City of New Port Richey has qualified for and is in the process of building a senior citizens center with CDBG monies.

STATE FUNDING

Financial assistance from the state that comes as a result of enabling legislation will be discussed in the local funding section, as the municipality is responsible for the implementation of such programs. The Florida Legislature in 1980, passed three major pieces of legislation addressing community revitalization:

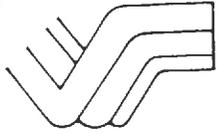
1. Tax Credits for New Jobs (Chapter 80-247): This creates an economic revitalization job creation credit against the corporate income tax to businesses which employ residents of blighted areas. The credit is equal to 25% of wages paid up to \$1500 a month for one year.
2. Tax Credits for New or Expanded Businesses (Chapter 80-248): New businesses or expansion of existing businesses located in slum or blighted areas can receive an economic revitalization tax incentive credit against the corporate income tax. The amount of allowable credit is determined by the ad valorem taxes paid on expansion related property by an expanded business.
3. Tax Credits for Contribution to Community Development Projects (Chapter 80-249): The Community Improvement Act of 1980 is included in this bill and provides incentives for private corporations to participate in revitalization projects undertaken by redevelopment organizations. It established a procedure through which businesses may receive a tax credit of 50% of their contributions to eligible community development projects. There is an annual limit of \$200,000, with a program cap of \$3 million.

LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Through state enabling legislation, New Port Richey has the authority to utilize financial tools such as tax increment financing and revenue bonds.

1. Tax Increment Financing: Tax increment financing as a tool for redevelopment is increasing in popularity as a method for financing redevelopment projects. The Community Redevelopment Act of 1969 was amended in 1977 to include provisions for tax increment financing. This state act allows municipalities to use increases in property tax revenue to finance the necessary public investment in the target area. The philosophy behind tax increment financing is to freeze the tax base of the redevelopment district so all future property tax revenues above the baseline is put into a trust fund. This assumes that the increases in tax revenue are produced by the redevelopment projects. The trust fund monies, managed by the Community Redevelopment Agency, are used to directly finance public improvements. This method of financing local redevelopment projects has one minor drawback; other governmental agencies are going without tax revenues that would be at their disposal if tax increment financing were not instituted. Tax increment financing has been initiated by the New Port Richey City Council. The adoption of this plan will constitute the basis for the establishment of the Redevelopment Trust Fund.
2. Revenue Bonds: Revenue bonds are payable from revenues derived from tolls, charges, user fees or rents that are collected from those citizens who use a particular municipal service or facility. The interest costs and marketability of revenue bonds vary widely. The bond market is usually more receptive to revenue bonds for facilities that are subject to mandatory use such as water, sewer, electricity or gas. Uses of non-mandatory nature such as recreational purposes generally require higher interest rates.

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November 18, 1986

9455 Koger Boulevard
St. Petersburg, FL 33702-2491
(813) 577-5151/Tampa 224-9380
Suncom 586-3217

The Honorable Robert G. Prior
Mayor, City of New Port Richey
320 East Main Street
New Port Richey, Florida 33552

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 Vice Chairman
 Councilman William Vannatta
 Secretary/Treasurer
 Councilman Robert G. Prior
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 Anthony C. Samarkos
 City of Temple Terrace
 Councilman
 James D. Whittemore

Dear Mayor Prior:

It is my pleasure to transmit to you the Downtown Revitalization Plan prepared for the City of New Port Richey by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. This Plan has been prepared to comply with the Agreement for Technical Services executed in May 1986, between the City and the Council.

This Revitalization Plan addresses a broad range of issues pertinent to the success of Downtown, and sets the stage for a detailed implementation plan by:

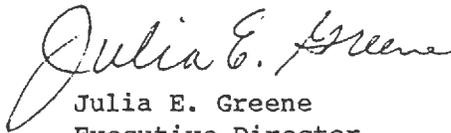
- identifying ways to capitalize on the business, historical, recreational and cultural amenities unique to Downtown;
- listing cost-efficient methods to rebuild the image of Downtown;
- seeking private sector commitment to assist in the revitalization effort using the Community Cooperative as the catalyst group; and,
- recommending ways to restore those activities and aesthetic qualities which will make the downtown area more functional, vibrant and attractive.

Two special sections, not included in our Agreement, are contained in this report. The first is a section which links this Plan with the Florida State Plan and the proposed Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan. The inclusion of this section will allow the Plan to be used as part of the City's Local Government Comprehensive Plan update, pursuant to the Growth Management Act of 1985.

The second special section describes the results of a survey sent to merchants and residents to record their perceptions and use of the downtown area. The survey results provide useful insights into the several policy options relevant to revitalizing downtown.

The Council would be pleased to work with the City of New Port Richey in implementing the recommendations contained in this report or providing any additional assistance or information.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Julia E. Greene in cursive script.

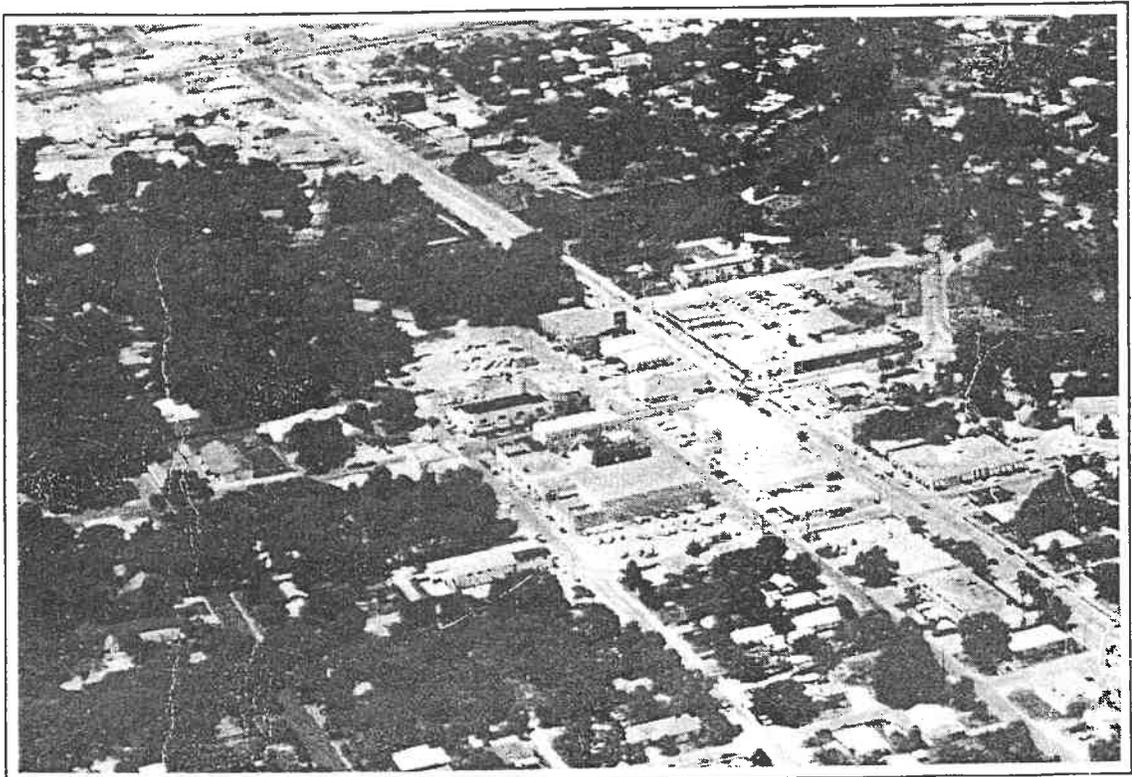
Julia E. Greene
Executive Director

JEG/lk

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable City Council Members
Mr. Charles W. McCool, City Manager

A Plan for Revitalization



Downtown New Port Richey, Florida



November 1986

A PLAN FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF
DOWNTOWN NEW PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA

prepared for the
City of New Port Richey
by the
Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

November 1986

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APPENDICES

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INTRODUCTION

Downtown business districts traditionally have been the economic and cultural activity center for cities. In the past quarter-century in America, however, the role and vitality of downtowns has declined at an historically unprecedented rate and magnitude. Various forces have contributed to the decline of inner cities, including construction of interstate and beltway highways, the post-World War II mortgage programs, and increasing ownership of and reliance on automobiles. The core of the issue is that businesses have followed residents in relocating to the suburbs.

This downward spiral, rooted in basic economics, has become all too familiar. As shoppers increasingly patronize suburban stores, some merchants will immediately follow the shoppers to the suburbs. There the merchant will be more convenient to the shoppers home, and will have ample land for parking and expansion. For those merchants who stay at downtown stores, profits dwindle, and revenue that would have been used for maintenance and upgrading of downtown stores is now barely enough to cover lease or mortgage payments. The lack of reinvestment of income into maintaining buildings causes deterioration, and ultimately, vacancies.

Downtown New Port Richey could be easily dismissed as another victim of the suburbanization of American society. The role of New Port Richey's downtown has undeniably been altered by the ongoing construction of highway and neighborhood shopping centers, as have the roles of most other downtown areas throughout the nation. However, each of those affected downtowns is made unique by its past, present, and future roles in the local fabric.

Downtown New Port Richey should be viewed in this light. While it does not approach the historical, architectural, and economic heritages of other older and larger cities, New Port Richey has an identifiable and concrete legacy upon which to build. Moreover, despite the loss of several businesses through outmigration or failure, Downtown New Port Richey continues to function as a business, cultural, and recreational enclave offering unique amenities.

In the eyes of many, the outmigration of business and the subsequent decline of Downtown New Port Richey is an irreversible process. However, tolerating further decline will allow the condition of downtown to act as a blight on remaining businesses, surrounding neighborhoods, and the city's image. The need for revitalization is clear. Development of strategies for combatting the outmigration of business is needed.

The downtowns of the future will probably never regain the economic dominance they once commanded. Downtowns can, however, continue to function not only as important economic activity centers, but also as the very personality of a city. They are a connection to our past, with a legacy and character that is unique. Such is the case in New Port Richey.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The City Council of the City of New Port Richey has contracted with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council to have the Council prepare a downtown revitalization study for the city's central business district.

This study addresses a range of issues pertinent to the success of downtown. These include, but are not limited to, problems and opportunities in downtown, land use and the regulation thereof, marketing and promotion, design of publicly- and privately-owned land and structures, transportation and parking, financing improvements, and the roles of the public and private sectors in implementing improvements.

While the study focuses on the older section of downtown east of the Pithlachascotee River, recommendations also include areas lying between the river and U.S. 19, as well as other areas adjacent to Main Street, the Boulevard and the rest of downtown. Study area boundaries are shown in Figure 1 on the following page.

One of the major tasks undertaken in preparing this plan was to conduct surveys of residents of the city, as well as merchants and professionals located in the downtown area. The surveys were designed to identify issues of relevance to downtown revitalization, including areas of concern, strengths of the downtown, and possible strategies for restoring activity.

An extensive analysis of existing conditions in downtown and throughout the city and nearby outlying areas was also conducted to provide an overview of the people that live in downtown's trade area, the physical condition of downtown, the types of businesses that are located there and other factors.

The end result is a phased plan for the revitalization of downtown New Port Richey, including recommendations for restoring activity and aesthetic qualities which will make the downtown more functional, vibrant, and attractive.

HISTORY OF THE STUDY AREA

A brief look at the history of New Port Richey's development provides insights into why the existing situation has occurred, and what forces are at work in this area, the only significant downtown in the western part of Pasco County. Two works in particular, West Pasco's Heritage and Florida Cracker Days in West Pasco County: 1830-1982, provide much of the following accounts of the growth of New Port Richey.

Having originally developed in the early decades of the twentieth century, Downtown New Port Richey is somewhat "young" by comparison to other downtowns in the eastern United States. The land on which Downtown New Port Richey is situated was surveyed and platted in 1911 and grew mainly through the efforts of the port Richey Company, which owned and developed much of the cities of the city. The port Richey Company began marketing the cities of New Port Richey and adjacent Port Richey as the "ideal retirement setting" as early as 1911.

The city developed as both a retirement community and a service center for outlying farmland: aided by the extension of railroad service and its location on a north-south route along Florida's west coast, ran through the center of the business district (what is now the Boulevard).

New Port Richey enjoyed substantial growth between 1911 and Florida's real estate bust of the late-1920s. Most of the pre-1920 buildings in the downtown were of wood-frame construction, and have burned in the intervening years, but many structures built in the 1920s survive and give downtown much of its present character. These buildings include the Hacienda Hotel, the Pasco Hardware Building, the former First State Bank, the Melghan Theater, and several others.

It was at this time that New Port Richey entertained the Hollywood crowd, attracting film stars Thomas Meighan, Gloria Swanson, and Ed Wynn, golf pro Gene Sarazen, composer Irving Berlin, bandleader Paul Whiteman, author Pearl Buck, and others to visit and invest in land in town. Representatives of Paramount Pictures came to town to discuss the possibility of creating a motion picture studio here. The Depression ended these plans.

Substantial growth returned in the 1950s. While that city's population rise from 1,500 to more than 3,500. While that growth increased the downtown's market area, it also planted the seeds for the decline of the central business district. Those seeds were planted firmly in the soil of the U.S. Highway 19 corridor.

U.S. Highway 19 was opened in 1951, replacing Dixie Highway as the main north-south transportation artery for the Gulf Coast. Much of the corridor was unzoned county land prior to development, and the abundant acreage allowed multi-lane roads, vast parking areas, and large stores with a minimum of development regulation. Commercial development has continued to grow and flourish on U.S. 19 over the last thirty-five years. The latest traffic counts by the Florida Department of Transportation indicate that the Main Street/U.S. 19 intersection has the highest traffic volume in Pasco County.

The influence that U.S. 19 has had on Downtown New Port Richey has been alluded to above. Downtown has evolved from what was once the retail focal point of the area to what is now primarily a service sector enclave. Professional offices are the dominant influence and land use in the downtown. This dominance changes the use patterns in downtown, changes the look of buildings, the demand for certain services, and the ambiance.

But these are not the only changes in downtown. Several buildings, through age and lack of upkeep, have begun to look deteriorated. Public infrastructure and facilities, such as sidewalks, streets, and parking lots require attention. This report considers problems and opportunities in the downtown area and describes a multifaceted approach for revitalizing Downtown New Port Richey.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following sections analyze the existing conditions and situations for relevant issues such as the natural and man-made physical environments, public services, aesthetic considerations, and economics. The analysis begins with a look at demographic statistics for downtown's trade area.

DEMOGRAPHICS

A half-dozen aspects of demographics are examined in this section, including total population, age, income, occupations, education levels, and housing.

Population

As shown by figures in Table 1 on the following page, the population of the City of New Port Richey has shown dramatic growth rates dating back to the 1950s. Ironically, this period coincides with the decline of downtown as the regional activity center. What once served as the economic focal point for a city of 1,500 inhabitants now sits vastly underutilized and underpatronized in an area with tenfold its previous population.

As is often the case in intercensal years, there is considerable disagreement over the city's current population. The most recent estimates of the city's population, (as calculated by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Florida), indicate that growth rates have slowed considerably in the first half of this decade as the amount of open land available for development has decreased. The 1986 estimate showed a total of 13,052 residents, for an average annual increase of nearly 2.6 percent since 1980.

City officials feel a more realistic figure is somewhere in the 16,000 to 17,000 range, based on multiplying the approximately 7,800 electrical hookups by an average household size of 2.02 residents, and adding in 700 residents of group quarters. This results in an approximate population of 16,400. This would indicate an average annual growth rate of nearly 6.6 percent.

The various estimates of the city's current population illustrate the difficulties involved with projecting the size of the population that downtown will be serving in future years. Projecting the city's population growth is a task complicated by the counteracting variables of annexation and a dwindling supply of vacant, developable land within city borders.

TABLE 1

POPULATION DATA
1950 - 2000

Year	City of New Port Richey	Pasco County	SMSA	State
1950	1512	20259	-	-
% change	39.2	N/A	-	-
1960	3520	36785	-	-
% change	132.8	79.0	-	-
1970	6098	75955	1,088,549	-
% change	73.2	106.5	31.1	37.2
1980	11,196	194,123	1,569,152	-
% change	83.6	155.6	44.2	43.5
1985 estim.	12,558	233,272	1,782,179	-
% change	12.2	20.5	13.6	15.8
1990 proj.	N/A	279,100	1,966,805	-
% change	N/A	19.7	10.4	11.6

Sources: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Florida Estimates of Population, 1985 (issued in February, 1986); and Projections of Florida Population By County, 1985 - 2020 (issued in April, 1986).

Note: Projections of 1990 population have not been performed for cities, hence figures are not available for the City of New Port Richey.

Downtown's trade area is not confined to the city's borders, however. What is perhaps a more proper measure of the trade area can be obtained by examining the five census tracts which include the city and adjacent county land (Figure 2). In 1980 these tracts had a total population of 32,649. These areas are increasingly being served by suburban strip shopping centers. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the residential portions of these tracts are within a three mile radius of downtown.

Population Characteristics

The 1980 Census revealed that residents over the age of 55 accounted for more than half of the city's population, whereas in the Tampa/St. Petersburg Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) the over-55 age group represented only one-third of total population (see Table 2). All other age groups in New Port Richey were, on a percentage basis, smaller than for the SMSA as a whole.

Consequently, the median age in the city, 57.8, was significantly higher than that of the SMSA (40.6) in 1980. However, the age distribution in the city showed a marked shift toward younger age groups between 1970 and 1980. The median age fell from 62.2 to 57.8, and the over-55 age groups declined from 60.4 percent of total population to 51.0 percent. This is a reflection of the fact that the below-55 age groups grew faster than the over-55 groups during the 1980's. This trend may continue in light of soaring school enrollment figures and it will have implications for the marketing strategies of downtown merchants and professionals.

In comparing the city versus the county portions of the five-tract trade area, it can be seen that the over-55 population is concentrated more heavily in the county portion. The city portion is 51 percent over the age of 55, while the county portion is 58 percent over-55.

The racial composition of the city is 99.5 percent caucasian. No other racial group accounts for more than 30 residents, and in fact, there was a total of only 61 non-whites identified in the 1980 Census.

Education

The 1980 Census revealed that the levels of educational attainment among city residents are somewhat lower than in the SMSA. Of the residents over the age of 25, the percentage of high school graduates in the city (57.7) is considerably lower than that of the SMSA (65.7 percent).

Similarly, the percentage of residents with one or more years of college is much lower in New Port Richey (19.2 percent) than in the SMSA (29.9 percent). (The city and county portions of the trade area have virtually identical averages.) A possible explanation exists in the fact that many of today's retirees were high school or college age during the Depression, and entered the workforce rather than seek further education.

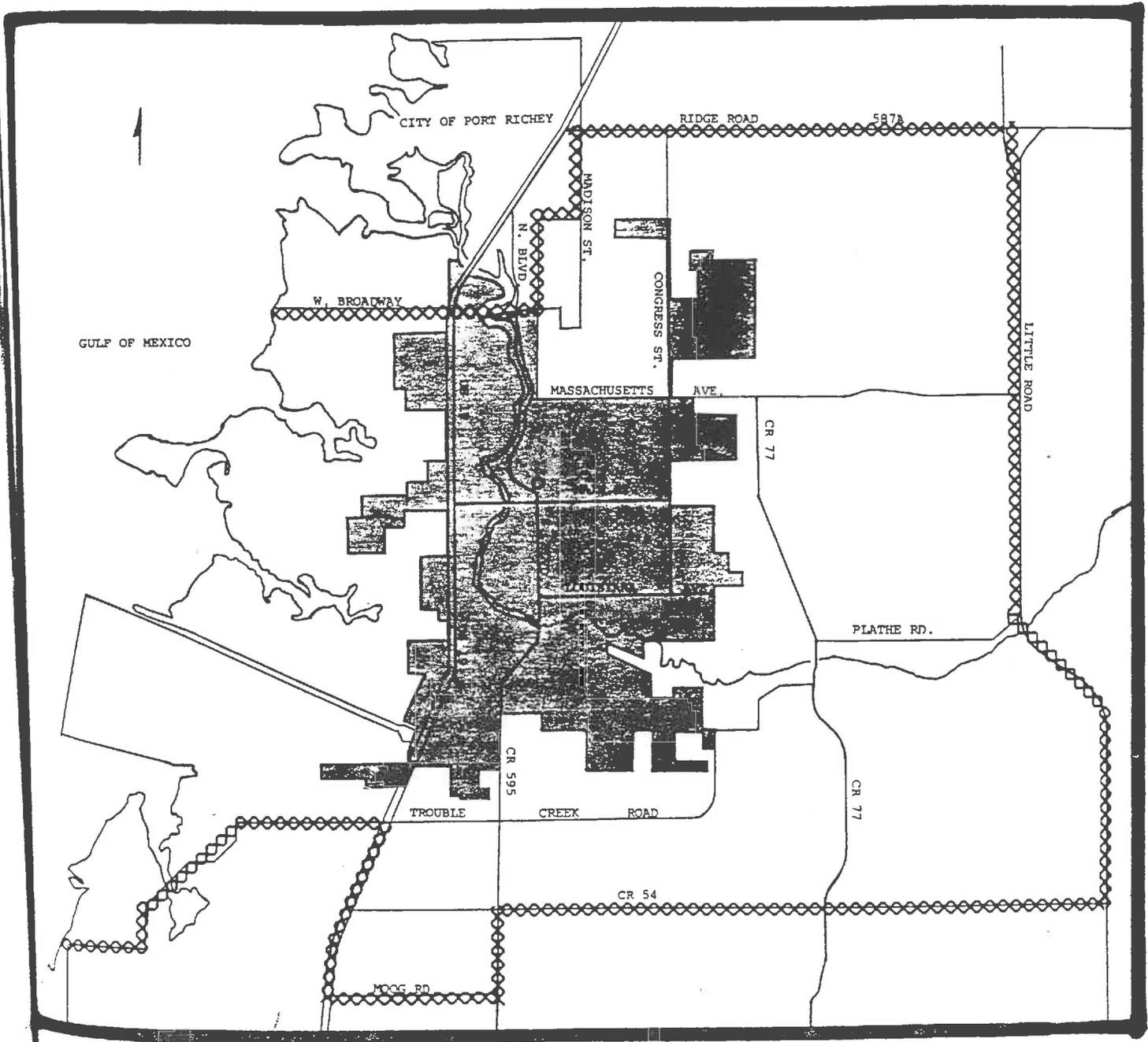
TABLE 2

AGE STRUCTURES
1980

	New Port Richey		5-Tract Trade Area		Tampa/St. Pete. SMSA
	#	%	#	%	%
Under 5	409	3.7	1063	3.3	5.2
5-9	441	3.9	1222	3.7	5.9
10-14	528	4.7	1398	4.3	6.6
15-19	615	5.5	1725	5.3	7.7
20-24	677	6.1	1635	5.0	7.6
25-34	1131	10.1	2691	8.2	13.7
35-44	774	6.9	2144	6.6	9.9
45-54	914	8.2	2634	8.1	9.7
55-64	1659	14.8	5739	17.6	12.3
65-74	2203	19.7	7767	23.8	12.8
75 & over	1845	16.5	4631	14.2	8.6
TOTAL	11196		32649		

Source: 1980 Census of Population & Housing; Tampa-St. Petersburg Census Tracts, Table P-1.

FIGURE 2
FIVE TRACT TRADE AREA



- BORDER OF FIVE TRACT AREA
- CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY



Employment

Table 3 provides data on the occupations of city residents. While the comparison to SMSA figures is not startling, it does highlight the role of service sector employment among local residents.

In this table it is apparent that local residents are more likely to be involved in non-manufacturing jobs than are residents of the SMSA as a whole. The unusually large service sector may exist to meet the needs of retirees and tourists. This is supported by another employment statistic, the percentage of the over-16 population in the workforce. In New Port Richey, that percentage was merely 41.1 percent at the time of the Census, well below the SMSA's 57.0 percent. This is a reflection of the role of retirees, few if any of whom are in the labor force.

Table 3 also shows that service sector employment is more concentrated in Professional and Related Services than in Wholesale and Retail Trade. It appears that: 1) local households are making major purchases outside of the area, or 2) that per household spending is lower due to the fixed incomes of many local retirees. Either of these possible occurrences could limit the options of revitalizing a small downtown.

Income

The income data included in Table 4 present another challenge for revitalization, although the numbers are somewhat deceiving. The 1980 Census showed heavy concentrations of households in the under-\$15,000 income groups, relative to SMSA totals. In fact, 70 percent of the city's households fell under \$15,000 in 1979 income, as opposed to 55 percent in the SMSA.

The mean, median, and per capita income figures are all significantly lower for the city than the SMSA, also. An encouraging statistic, though, is the low percentage of residents with incomes below the poverty level. In 1979 the city compared favorably to the SMSA in this regard, with 9.9 percent of its residents below the poverty level, as opposed to 11.7 percent in the region.

The county portions of the five-tract trade area had mean (average) incomes higher than did the city. While the city mean was \$12,750, the mean for the county portions of the five tracts was \$14,088. The overall mean for the five tracts, including both the city and the county, was \$13,626.

Total income (in 1979) was over \$204 million in the five tracts. Disproportionately, the city accounted for less than one-third of that total (\$65.7 million). Downtown New Port Richey should reach outside city borders to expand its customer base.
Gulf Harbors, etc. (\$ out of city)

TABLE 3

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE - 1980

	New Port Richey		SMSA
	#	%	%
Managerial & Professional Specialty Occupations	713	21.7	22.4
Technical, Sales and Administrative Support	1082	32.9	33.3
Service Occupations	564	17.1	14.2
Farming, Forestry & Fishing	69	2.1	2.3
Precision Production, Craft & Repair	545	16.6	13.5
Operators, Fabricators & Laborers	321	9.7	14.3
TOTAL EMPLOYED	3294		
Manufacturing	262	13.6	23.8
Wholesale and Retail Trade	792	41.1	43.4
Professional and Related Services	872	45.3	32.8
TOTAL	1926		

Source: 1980 Census of Population & Housing; General Social & Economic Characteristics, Section 1, Table 158.

TABLE 4

SELECTED INCOME STATISTICS
1980

	New Port Richey		5-Tract Trade Area		SMSA
	#	%	#	%	%
Less than \$5,000	852	16.5	2129	14.2	14.3
5,000 - 7,499	735	14.3	2120	14.1	10.8
7,500 - 9,999	750	14.6	2215	14.8	10.7
10,000 - 14,999	1243	24.1	3653	24.4	19.1
15,000 - 19,999	751	14.6	2189	14.6	14.5
20,000 - 24,999	343	6.7	1125	7.5	10.7
25,000 - 34,999	359	7.0	942	6.3	11.5
35,000 - 49,999	98	1.9	481	3.2	5.5
50,000 - or more	20	0.4	130	0.9	3.0
Median	\$10,786	-	N/A	-	\$13,578
Mean	12,750	-	13,626	-	17,191
Per Capita	5,963	-	N/A	-	7,071
Percent of Population Below Poverty Level	-	9.9	N/A	-	11.7

Source: 1980 Census of Population & Housing; Tampa-St. Petersburg Census Tracts, Table P-11.

Housing

The 1980 Census showed 5,912 year-round housing units in the city. On the average they were slightly smaller, less expensive, and less crowded than elsewhere in the Tampa Bay region.

The median number of rooms per unit was slightly below the SMSA median (4.4 versus 4.6), as was median number of persons per unit (1.9 versus 2.1). Owner-occupied housing in the city had more rooms per unit (4.9) than did rental units (3.7). Likewise, owner-occupied housing also had more people per unit (1.98) than did rental units (1.64).

The median value of owner-occupied housing in the city, \$33,800, was 15 percent below the SMSA median of \$39,900. Median rent in the city, \$187 per month, was less than five percent below the SMSA median rent (\$196). [Seventy three percent of the occupied housing units were owner-occupied] This compares favorably with the SMSA's 72 percent owner-occupancy rate.

The county portions of the trade area more closely approximate the regional medians, and in some cases slightly exceed them. The most notable exception is the area between U.S. 19 and the Gulf of Mexico, where median value of owner-occupied housing was \$60,000, far in excess of the regional median.

At the time of the 1980 Census over half of the city's housing units had been built since 1970. Less than one-quarter of the units pre-date 1950 (see Table 5).

TABLE 5

HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION

	New Port Richey		SMSA
	#	%	%
1979 - March, 1980	381	6.4	5.9
1975 - 1978	900	15.2	12.7
1970 - 1974	1789	30.2	24.9
1960 - 1969	1392	23.5	25.3
1950 - 1959	843	14.2	17.7
1940 - 1949	255	4.3	6.4
1939 or earlier	358	6.1	7.1

Source: 1980 Census of Population & Housing; Tampa-St. Petersburg Census Tracts, Table H-7.

ZONING AND EXISTING LAND USES

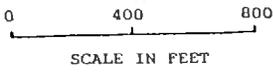
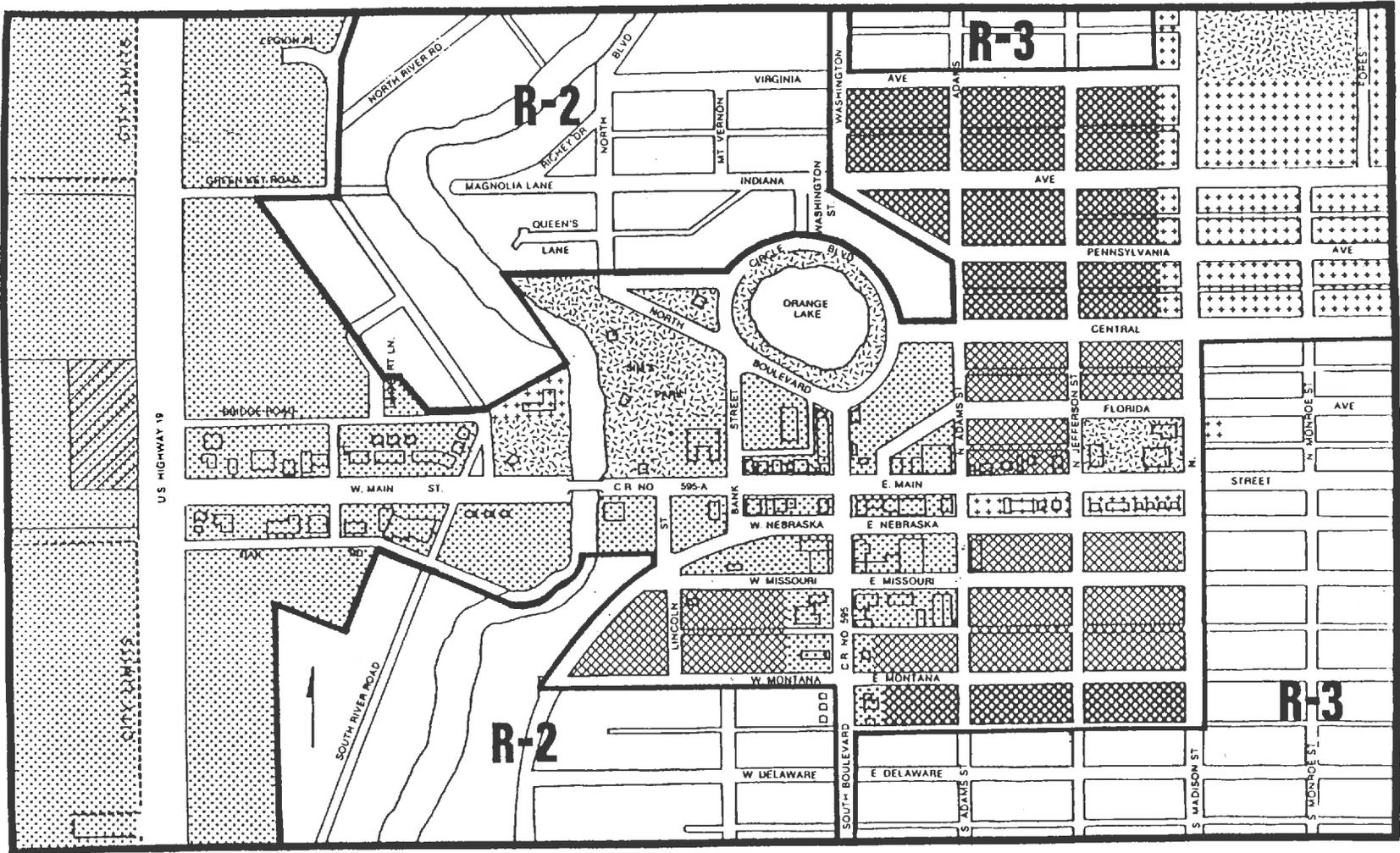
Figure 3 shows the existing zoning for the study area. The Commercial category is the most prevalent in downtown, although Multi-Family Residential and the Professional-Medical Facilities categories can be found along East Main Street. The Commercial zone stretches from Adams Street west to U.S. 19, and from Circle Boulevard south to the alley between Montana and Delaware Streets. The Commercial zone is surrounded by transitional zones consisting of Government (the Sims Park/Orange Lake area and the City Hall block) and High Density Multi-Family Residential. Single Family Residential lies beyond these transitional zones.

Two anomalies exist concerning the existing zoning. First is the classifying of the north side of the 200 block of East Main as High Density Multi-Family Residential. That block has only one structure used for residential purposes, the others having been converted to commercial use or replaced by commercial buildings. The second situation involves classifying the 200 block of Circle Boulevard as Commercial, despite the fact that it consists of three residences and a church.

From the city's zoning ordinance it can be seen that there is only one Commercial category, meaning that the same restrictions apply to commercial uses along U.S. 19, in downtown, neighborhoods, and suburban areas. The Professional-Medical Facilities category addresses several types of office establishments, and additionally allows certain types of "stores within structures". The ordinance makes no determination of what portions of the structure can be commercial as opposed to professional.

Figure 4 on the following page shows existing land uses in the study area. The intersection of Main and Boulevard stands out as the center of commercial activity, with other commercial activity stretching east on Main, south on Boulevard, and on West Main. A half dozen undeveloped parcels of land are scattered throughout the study area, several of them in prime locations on Main Street or within the heart of downtown.

There does not appear to be any serious concentration of vacant structures anywhere within the study area. A half dozen small storefronts, a moderate sized building, and a small amount of unrenovated second floor space is vacant in the Main/Boulevard area. Three of the storefronts became vacant in recent weeks after having been used by another business for storage prior to an expansion. They are reported to have been leased for future office use. Two small storefronts, two small to moderate sized buildings, and an 18,000 square foot building are vacant on Main Street between U.S. 19 and the river. It was observed that much of the vacant space in the older part of downtown had no signage to advertise its availability.

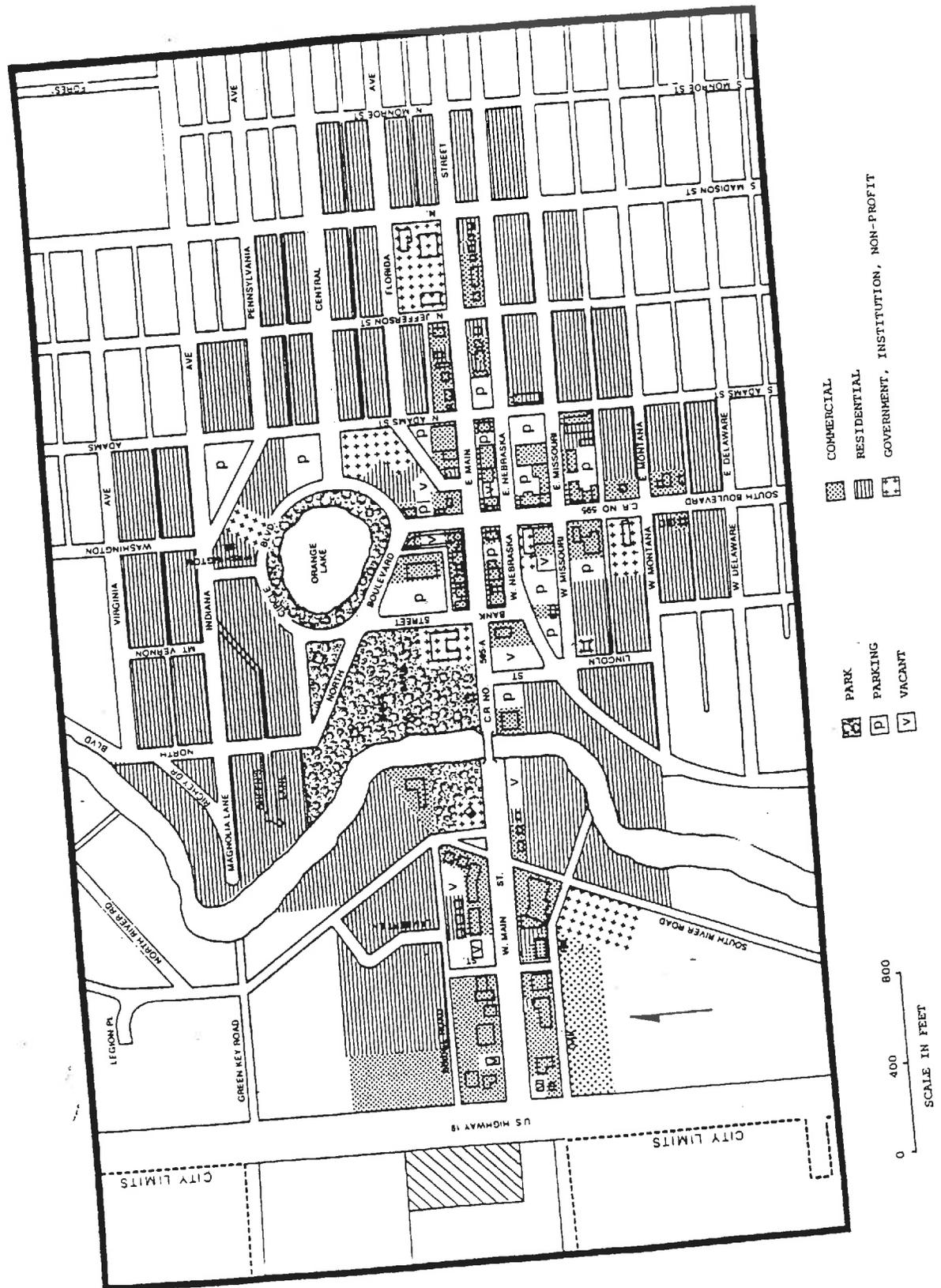


- MULTI-FAMILY, MEDIUM DENSITY
- MULTI-FAMILY, HIGH DENSITY
- SINGLE FAMILY
- COMMERCIAL
- PROFESSIONAL-MEDICAL
- GOVERNMENT

EXISTING ZONING

FIGURE 3

FIGURE 4
EXISTING LAND USES



There are five mixed use commercial/residential structures spread throughout the downtown. Four are two-story buildings with commercial use on the ground floor and residential use upstairs. The other is a house with a business in the front portion.

Public land includes the block containing City Hall and the Library, the Sims Park/Orange Lake recreation complex, municipal parking lots, and the Chamber of Commerce/boat ramp parcel. Institutional uses include two churches on Circle Boulevard, the Hacienda Home adjacent to Sims Park, and the NPR Shuffleboard Club on South Boulevard.

The commercial area west of the river was the most recent to develop, having been built in the style of strip highway development of the 1960s and thereafter. There was greater attention placed on the customer's use of the automobile, resulting in off-street parking located immediately in front of the stores. Additional parking was often provided behind stores, as well. Consequently, the area west of the river is stylistically and functionally different from the older portion of downtown east of the river.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Traffic circulation and parking are significant issues in downtown. The parking issue, in particular, is a major source of concern among merchants and residents, as indicated by the surveys of those two groups.

Parking

Both survey groups rated the current parking situation as the second worst aspect of downtown (exceeded only by the lack of variety of goods and services). When asked to rate certain aspects of downtown, 25 percent of the merchants gave parking the lowest rating, while 36 percent of the residents did likewise. And when asked what are the greatest problems in downtown, the merchants named parking most often while residents listed it as the second greatest problem.

Yet, the previously-mentioned survey results may be misleading since the merchant survey also asked whether parking was adequate near the individual merchant's store, and over 70 percent of the respondents said that there is sufficient parking near their location. This information, in combination with a survey of the utilization of city parking lots, indicates that the parking problem may be more related to perception than to the actual supply. A week-long, thrice per day survey of cars in the city's municipal lots revealed that three lots were operating well below capacity.

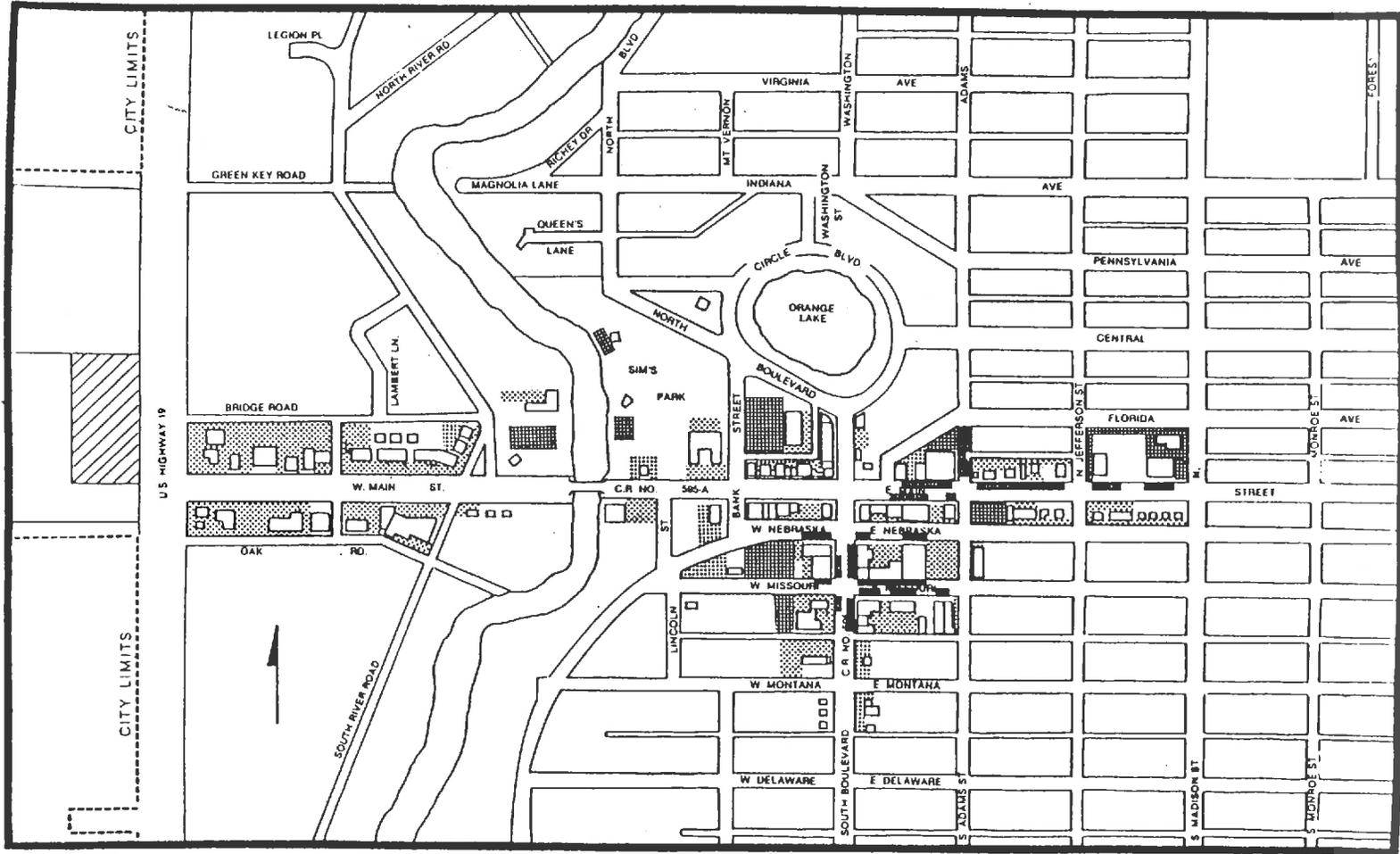
The lots surveyed, their capacity, and average percentage of occupancy are the Main/Adams lot (63 spaces, 24%), the West Nebraska Street lot directly behind NCNB Bank (66 spaces, 41%), and the West Missouri Street lot behind Miller's Bar (24 spaces, 29%). Conversely, the 15-car lot behind the Arcade Building actually averaged 127 percent of capacity, with cars parking in unpaved areas alongside the lot. Finally, the city's largest lot, the 100-car lot on North Bank Street averaged 71 percent of capacity.

One notable deviation from these use patterns occurs on evenings when the Richey Suncoast Theater is offering performances. On these evenings the combined effects of theater-goers and restaurant patrons results in virtual full-capacity usage of public and private spaces in the West Missouri/West Nebraska Streets area.

An inventory of parking spaces, both public and privately-owned, was conducted for the portion of downtown lying east of the Pithlachascotee River. The inventory revealed totals of 300 public off-street spaces, 132 on-street spaces, and 672 privately-owned off-street spaces. The inventory includes only commercial areas, and does not include the lots owned by First Baptist and Community Congregational Churches, nor the 25 spaces in Sims Park. The total of 1104 spaces averages out to just over ten spaces per merchant or professional in this area of downtown. The locations of these various types of parking are shown in Figure 5 on the following page.

The survey results regarding parking problems, and the under-utilization of existing municipal lots could be symptomatic of a number of problems. First, it is possible that the lots are not properly located to meet user needs. Second, there could be an unwillingness to walk from the under-utilized city lots to the driver's destination (this is the shopping mall mindset where shoppers will not park in a lot unless they can see their destination from the parking space). Finally, there could be a lack of awareness of where parking exists, and who is allowed to use it.

It is difficult to support the idea that the lots are poorly located, when in fact virtually every business in downtown is less than one block from municipal parking. It is more likely a combination of the shopping mall mindset and a lack of awareness that causes the tremendous concern with parking among merchants and residents. In fairness to those who voiced concern, there are identifiable "pockets" of parking congestion. These include the lot behind the Arcade Building, the area on and around South Boulevard between Nebraska and Missouri Streets, and the alley between the 100 block of West Main Street and North Boulevard. However, there is available municipal capacity within one block of each of these areas of congestion.



0 400 800
SCALE IN FEET

- ☒ OFF-STREET PRIVATE PARKING
- ▒ OFF-STREET PUBLIC PARKING
- ON-STREET PARKING

LOCATION OF PARKING

FIGURE 5

One of the observations which was most apparent in compiling the parking inventory was the confusion created by inadequate identification of on-street parking. On several streets there were confusing, misleading or inadequate signs which failed to clarify where and when on-street parking was legal. Perhaps the most glaring examples are tow-away zones which have only one sign, when two are needed to mark the beginning and end of the tow-away zone. Another example is found on North Bank Street, where signs state that parking on sidewalks is illegal, but make no reference to whether or not on-street parking is allowed. There is a need for better signage.

Traffic

Improving traffic circulation has been somewhat less of an issue than parking, but it is viewed by the merchants as a highly desirable aspect of revitalizing downtown. Nearly eighty percent of the merchants who were surveyed were in favor of making improvements to traffic circulation.

The most recent traffic counts available from the State of Florida Department of Transportation and Pasco County provided data only for North and South Boulevard. These figures, obtained in January, 1986, showed 11,941 vehicles per day on South Boulevard near the southern end of the CBD, and 7,092 vehicles per day on North Boulevard approximately three blocks north of the central business district (CBD). By comparison, U.S. 19 carried 52,001 vehicles per day just south of the intersection with Main Street and 47,124 per day just north of Main.

Surprisingly, these Average Daily Traffic Counts (ADTs) are quite similar to counts recorded in the 1977 Traffic Safety and Operational Needs Study performed for the City by the consulting firm of Kimley-Horn and Associates. In fact, the count for South Boulevard was slightly lower in 1986 (versus 14,950 in 1977). The count for North Boulevard had increased nearly 25 percent between 1977 and 1986 (from 5,700 to 7,092).

The 1977 study included Average Daily Traffic Counts for several downtown locations where 1986 counts are not available (see Figure 6). Due to the comparability of the data for locations where counts are available for both 1986 and 1977, it is assumed herein that the locations where only the earlier data is available are currently carrying similar amounts of vehicles as they carried in 1977. The 1977 data showed Main Street carrying approximately 11,000 vehicles per day near the City Library, 15,000 per day in front of Sims Park, and 18,000 per day near the U.S. 19 intersection. It should be noted that these counts were taken in January, at the peak of the tourist and winter visitor season.

The implications that these traffic volumes have for revitalization are both positive and negative. The high volume represents a large potential customer base and tremendous visibility for downtown merchants. On the down side, though, heavy volume creates difficulties for various types of downtown user groups. Merchants that were interviewed mentioned that some customers find it difficult to cross streets. Drivers may find it difficult to make turns or to back into parking spaces. Air and noise pollution was observed to be uncomfortable for pedestrians in some downtown locations (the 100 block of West Main is one notable example).

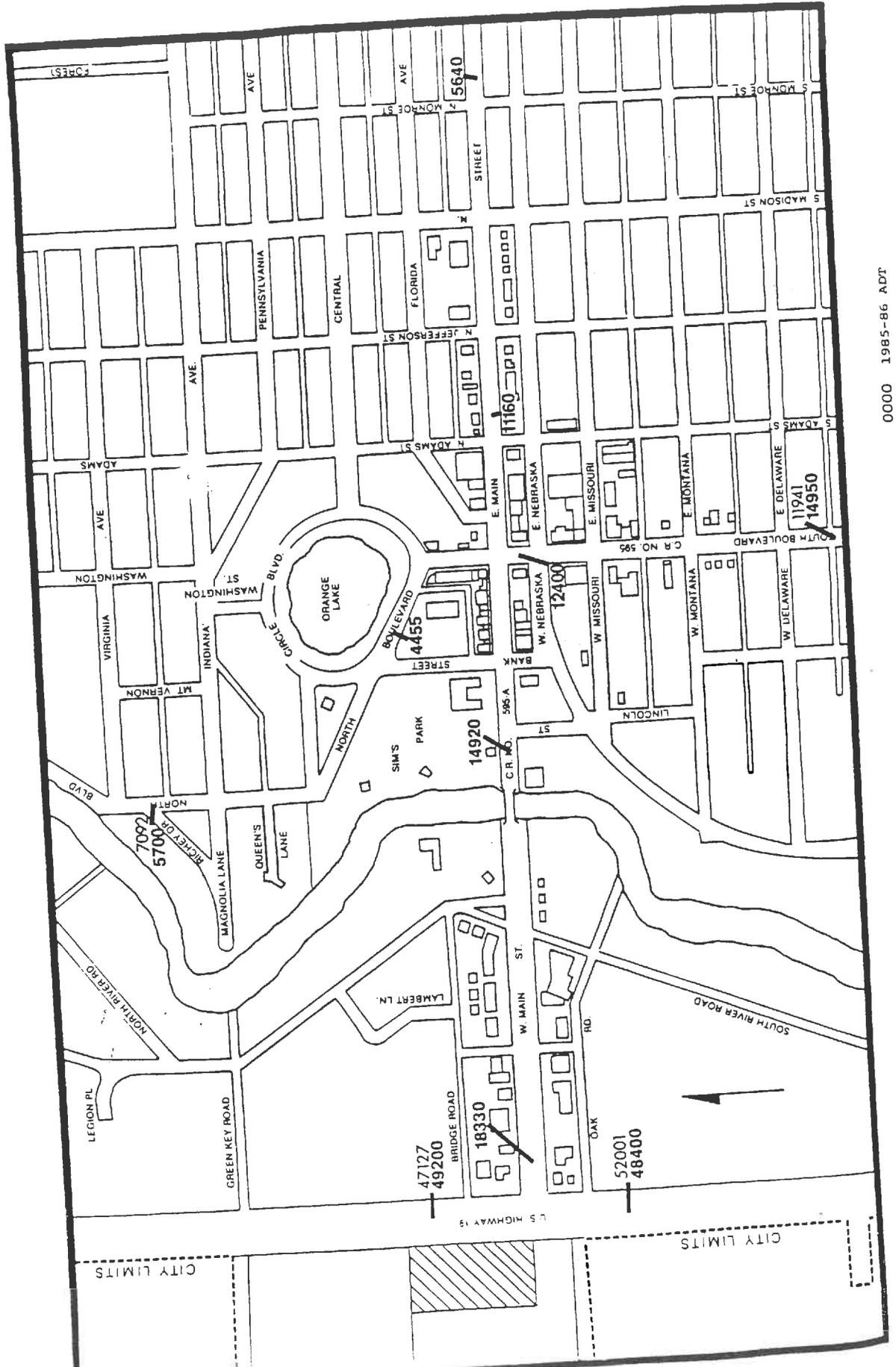
The possibilities for mitigating the impact of heavy traffic volume are constrained by the physical configuration of downtown. The physical barrier of the Pithlachascotee River is magnified by the fact that Main Street is the only east-west river crossing in the city. Alternative river crossings were recommended in Kimley-Horn's 1977 study, but the Madison Street bridge (a north-south route) is the only one built to date. An additional east-west crossing in the north half of the city would provide an alternative for vehicles which currently use Main Street to access North Boulevard and residential areas north of the CBD. This would also help to alleviate another problem -- the number of vehicles which currently travel through the Sims Park/Orange Lake recreational area. This latter dilemma will be discussed further in the section which addresses the park.

Another constraint is that of downtown buildings which abut the right-of-way. This is particularly a problem within a one block radius of Main Street and the Boulevard. It is impossible to widen roads in this area without demolishing most of the city's oldest and most significant structures. In order to accommodate turn lanes there is no on-street parking in front of stores in this area, which is a hardship for merchants. There is also little sidewalk capacity for accommodating street plantings and furnishings.

The Kimley-Horn study also recommended creating a one-way street system, with Main Street one-way westbound. Eastbound traffic would be re-routed onto Missouri Street via Lincoln Street. This action would cause several significant changes in the way downtown and some adjacent areas function. Among the changes that can be anticipated are:

1. It will allow and encourage more extensive commercial development of Missouri Street by placing several thousand more vehicles per day on that street. This is a positive aspect in that it allows expansion of the CBD's office and retail functions (thereby increasing the city's tax base). This will allow a greater mass of activity and increased property tax revenue from an area that is currently underutilized. Conversely, it will cause displacement of some residential households and will make the remaining residential areas arguably less desirable because of the traffic volume.

FIGURE 6
 AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS



0000 1985-86 ADT
 0000 1977 ADT

0000 1985-86 ADT
0000 1977 ADT

2. It will de-emphasize Main Street by making it less visible to eastbound travellers and less heavily travelled. This will be perceived by some merchants as detrimental to their business activity. The National Main Street Program also discourages one-way streets for this reason -- namely that people "browse" from their cars. According to this school of thought, one-ways reduce the number of browsers by reducing the amount of traffic on the street, thereby reducing the visibility of the stores and awareness that the stores exist. In this case, however, converting Main Street to a one-way will allow on-street parallel parking on both sides the entire length of the street (assuming two through lanes are preserved). This will be a positive boon for merchants in the 100 East and 100 West blocks of Main, who currently have little or no parking in front of their stores or offices. The advantage of giving customers the ability to park in front of stores may outweigh the browsing/visibility disadvantage.
3. Congestion at the intersection of Main and Congress would be greatly reduced, though not at an insignificant price. The cost of improvements in the Lincoln Street area, where eastbound traffic would swing over from Main to Missouri, could be significant, also. All four-way intersections on Main would also be reduced to three-ways, reducing the safety hazard.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The condition and carrying capacity of streets, sidewalks, curbs, sewers, and water lines, need to be addressed for two primary reasons. First, they can act as a constraint on redevelopment if capacity is insufficient to support new land uses, or if condition is so poor as to discourage developers and investors. Second, sound planning can avoid situations where improper phasing of improvements can result in, for example, expensive new sidewalks being torn up to replace sewers underneath.

Streets

Street conditions are generally quite good in the downtown. The two primary roads, Main and Boulevard, were built to withstand the heavy traffic they bear, and the pavement remains in good condition. The exception is in the 100 block of West Main, where the pavement is beginning to crack and buckle. Pavement in the 200 block of West Main is also beginning to crack slightly.

The city's on-going paving program for side streets has upgraded most of the inadequate streets in and around downtown. Several blocks on the side streets, however, are only in fair condition due to the cumulative effect of patching over the past few years. These will need repaving in the near future if continued patching occurs. Included among these streets are Lincoln, Bank, Adams, and the 100 blocks of Florida, West Missouri, and West Nebraska.

800
400
0
SCALE IN FEET

Curbs and Sidewalks

The bulk of the curbs and sidewalks in downtown are located on Main Street, Boulevard, Bank Street, and small sections of Missouri and Adams Streets. The lack of curbing on the remaining side streets is a problem in that it fails to control parking and where vehicles can enter streets. The lack of sidewalks also increases the danger for pedestrians.

Figure 7 identifies sidewalk conditions in downtown. The figure also identifies areas with insufficient width. It should be noted that most of the sidewalks are not badly deteriorated, but the majority are approaching an age where they will require replacement in the near future. Most are already showing signs of cracking. (please see photograph #13 in the Recommendations section of this report.)

The areas with the most deteriorated sections of sidewalk are the 300 block of South Boulevard, the 100 blocks of East and West Main Street, and portions of the 200 and 300 blocks of East Main where the sidewalks are also of insufficient width (three feet).

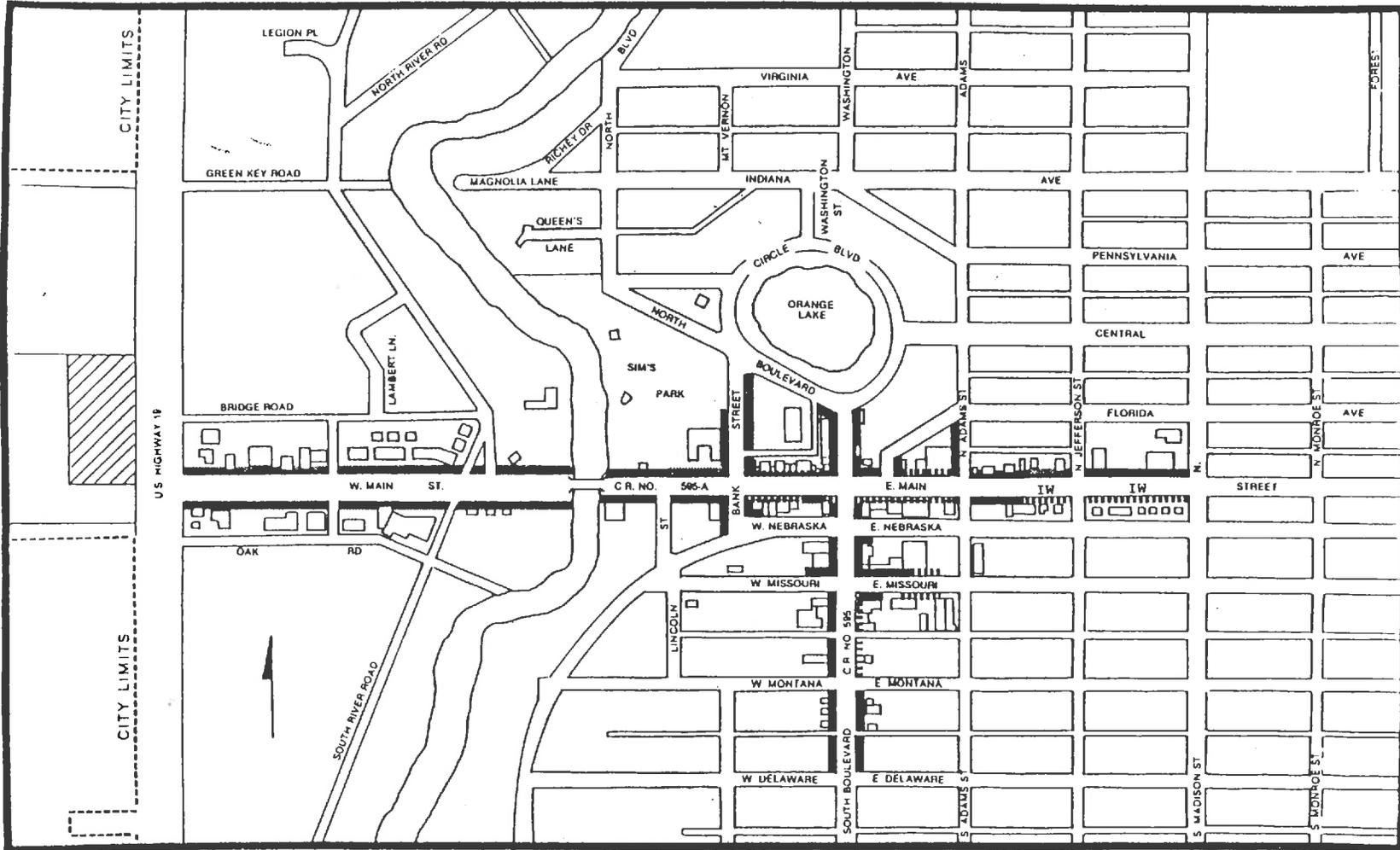
The landscaping program initiated by the Downtown Beautification Committee of the West Pasco Chamber of Commerce has resulted in the planting of 36 trees and bushes in the 100 blocks of East and West Main and the 100 blocks of North and South Boulevard. Four also were planted at the intersection of West Main and River Road. Another nine trees were planted on South Boulevard and West Missouri when the building at that corner was renovated a few years ago. Otherwise, there is virtually no landscaping in the sidewalk right-of-ways in downtown.

The vast majority of the curbs are old but in acceptable condition. However, due to subsequent street paving the curbs do not extend high enough above the pavement to act as a barrier to vehicles rolling onto the sidewalk, nor to keep stormwater off of the sidewalks.

Sewers

The city has separate systems for storm and sanitary sewers. Sanitary sewers are generally eight inches in diameter, a width which may be approaching full capacity, particularly around the downtown lift station, according to conversations with the city's Wastewater Treatment officials.

The age of the sanitary sewer line is another issue. The original lines in downtown, dating back to the late-1920s, are still in use. Recent videotape inspection of those lines has found them to be in a badly-deteriorated condition. Any capacity or condition problems should be resolved before commencing with revitalization-related repaving of streets or sidewalks.



0 400 800
SCALE IN FEET

——— GOOD CONDITION
 - - - FAIR CONDITION
 POOR
 IW- INSUFFICIENT WIDTH

SIDEWALK CONDITIONS

FIGURE 7

Storm sewers are also judged by Public Works officials to be of sufficient capacity for long-term needs. The one glaring need in the downtown area is to resolve the street flooding problem which occurs at the intersection of East Main and Jefferson Street during heavy rains. In a previous analysis of this problem the city's engineer and Public Works officials have indicated that the best solution is to construct a storm sewer line down Main Street to the main storm sewer collector line which extends along the Boulevard and empties into Orange Lake. An alternative may be to incorporate a retention facility into construction of the City Hall expansion project. Such a retention facility could be placed underneath a paved entrance plaza. This would minimize the necessary bearing capacity of the retention structure, as opposed to putting it under the main building where it would have to support the weight of the building.

STRUCTURAL SURVEY

The downtown area was developed entirely in the twentieth century, hence there are no buildings in the study area which pre-date 1916. In fact, many of the first commercial structures to be built in downtown were of wood frame construction, and have been destroyed by fire over the past several decades. A handful of buildings which were built in the real estate boom period of the early-1920s were made largely of brick and have survived relatively intact.

By comparison, less ornate styles which characterize post-World War II architecture were utilized in the structures which replaced some older buildings or were built as in-fill on the remaining vacant land. Added to this is the fact that the downtown was never very large to begin with. Consequently, the downtown possesses a relatively small number of significant examples of period architecture compared to other cities which either developed earlier or were larger.

Nonetheless, there is a definite "sense of place" created by the architectural character of the various older buildings in downtown. It is indeed fortunate that the significant older buildings have been neither dwarfed nor replaced by newer construction. This is often the case in periods of economic prosperity and growth. The decline of downtown's economic role as retail activity shifted to U.S. 19 prevented older buildings from being demolished for replacement by "more modern" structures.

Among the features that are of particular importance in giving the downtown buildings their character are the architectural style, ornamentation, and orientation. The most prevalent style in downtown is Mediterranean. Prominent examples of this style include the Hacienda, the Pasco Hardware Building (please see photo #5), and the Richey Suncoast Theatre. Other buildings have become more Mediterranean in appearance as a result of past renovations.

Two Greek Revival structures are the focal points of the Main/Boulevard intersection, the former First State Bank, now occupied by Casson Engineering, and the former Land Office, now the home of the Rock and Spence law firm. Downtown's most distinctive architecture is represented by these buildings. The Hacienda, with its bell tower, pillar and arch porches, and tile roofs, the Pasco, with its multi-tiered cupola, and the Theatre, with its dome and arched entranceway are also local treasures. The recent renovations of the Land Office and the Arcade have been immeasurably valuable in making the general public aware of how restoration can turn dingy, derelict buildings into attractive landmarks. (Please see photograph #6 in the Problem and Opportunities section.)

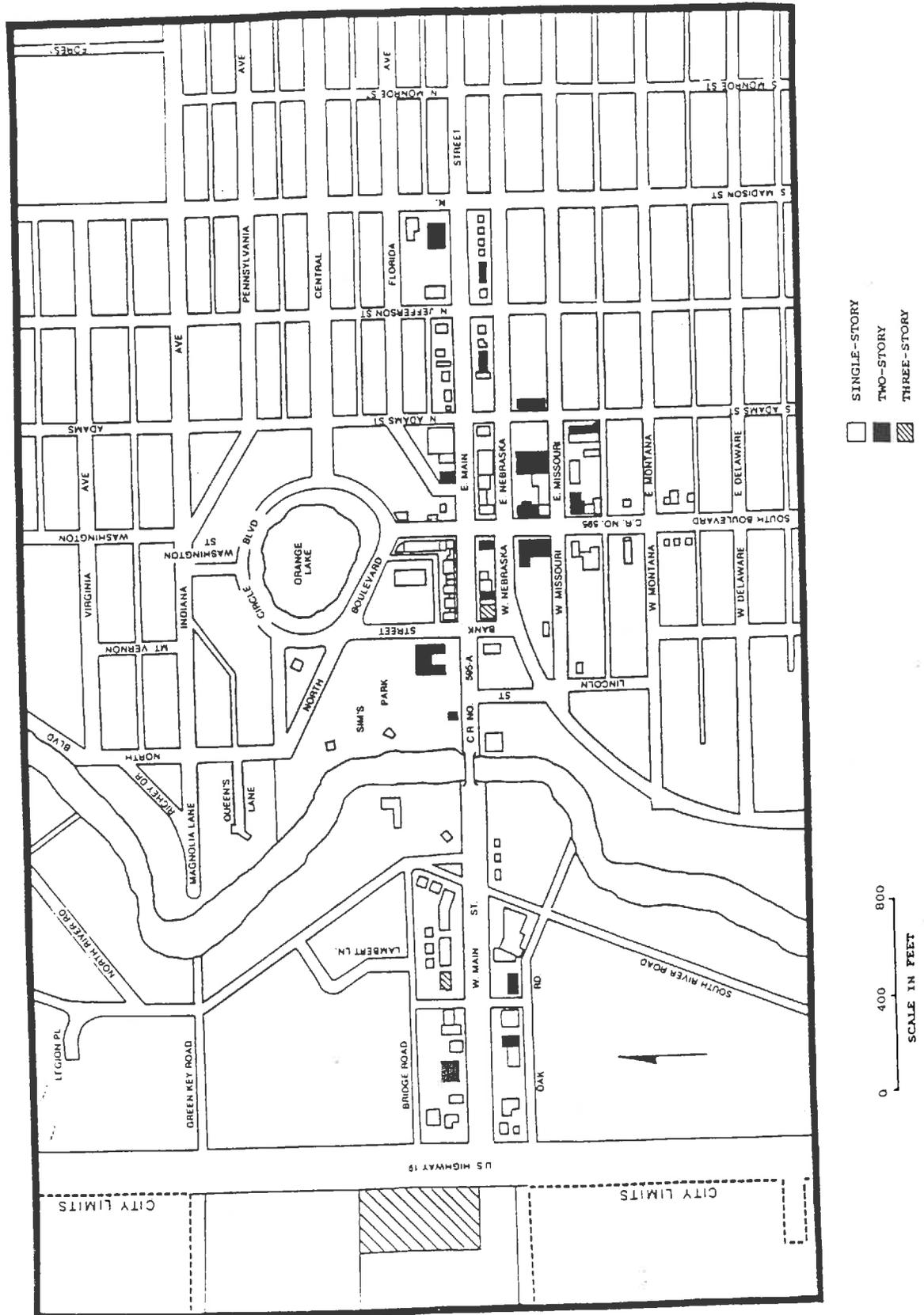
The bulk of the remaining buildings are one-story nondescript structures built after World War II. These post-war structures reflect the changing architectural preferences over the past thirty years. Most of the structures built during the 1950s and 1960s lack any ornamentation whatsoever. For an example, please see photograph #3 at the end of this section. Other examples can be found along much of West Main, although later facade renovations have attempted to make some of those buildings more distinctive by adding different building materials (i.e., brick, fieldstone, and tile) or more ornamentation (lights, etc.). Newer structures built during the last 15 years -- and in particular the last 5 years -- exemplify the trend toward more distinctive and identifiable styles. Examples include Adamek Builders Supply, built in the early 1970s, which features a Georgian pedimented portico, and the Bazsuly building at 309 East Main, which is strongly Mediterranean.

One element that is common to many of the buildings downtown, regardless of their age, is the overhanging sidewalk canopy. These can be found (or were originally found) on buildings such as the 1920s Clark Mercantile (now the Wag-On Inn) and Pasco Hardware, and the 1950s storefronts in the 100 block of West Main. The canopies were and still are a practical, functional way of protecting pedestrians from the notorious Florida sun and rain. They should be preserved and utilized as a distinctive facet of downtown architecture.

Another common element is the use of wrought iron. Many of the Mediterranean buildings used wrought iron for false second floor balconies, as on the Theatre and the Pasco Hardware facades. Even the 1950's storefronts used wrought iron in some cases to suspend canopies.

The scale of the buildings is also a common feature. With only two exceptions, the buildings are one or two stories in height. The exceptions are an addition built on the Ellis (now NCNB) Bank several years ago, and the former Suncoast News building at 607 West Main. Several of the multi-story buildings have vacant or underutilized upper floors, including the Wag-On Inn, the former Suncoast News, 205-11 South Boulevard, and the Pasco Hardware Building. Please see Figure 8 on the following page.

FIGURE 8
BUILDING HEIGHTS



The orientation of the buildings in the east portion of downtown is unmistakably directed at the pedestrian, as opposed to the automobile-oriented west portion of downtown. This is a result of the two areas developing at different periods in the city's history. Buildings in the older east portion usually extend to the sidewalk, whereas most of the buildings in the west portion have off-street parking lots fronting the stores, in typical strip development fashion. As a result, the older portion of downtown is much more concentrated. While this places constraints on traffic movement by limiting road width, it also allows the pedestrian to move from building to building and across streets without travelling great distances. In other words, the older portion of downtown retains its physical layout which makes it conducive to the pedestrian.

As with any city that retains some of its older buildings, downtown New Port Richey is a living museum linking the present to the past. Retaining the old may be regarded by some as foolish nostalgia which impedes progress, and in some cases this becomes true. However, significant older structures have proven to be a powerful drawing card by creating a visually diverse and interesting environment for living, shopping, and recreating.

Downtowns built in the early twentieth century and before were built at human scale, as opposed to today's automobile-oriented development. This fosters a concentration of activity in which the pedestrian does not feel lost in a sea of asphalt or among towering skyscrapers. New Port Richey is fortunate for having retained that human scale. And to bring the idea home in more measurable terms, federal tax incentives have made renovation of older buildings a potentially profitable alternative to new construction.

ECONOMIC BASE OF DOWNTOWN

The figure on the next page, figure 9, provides a visual overview of the types of businesses which comprise the "economic base" of downtown. The businesses are classified according to the definitions of retail, service, and wholesale establishments used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Businesses that have elements of both retail and wholesale trade are noted as such. A complete list of all merchants located on the CBD are listed in Appendix C.

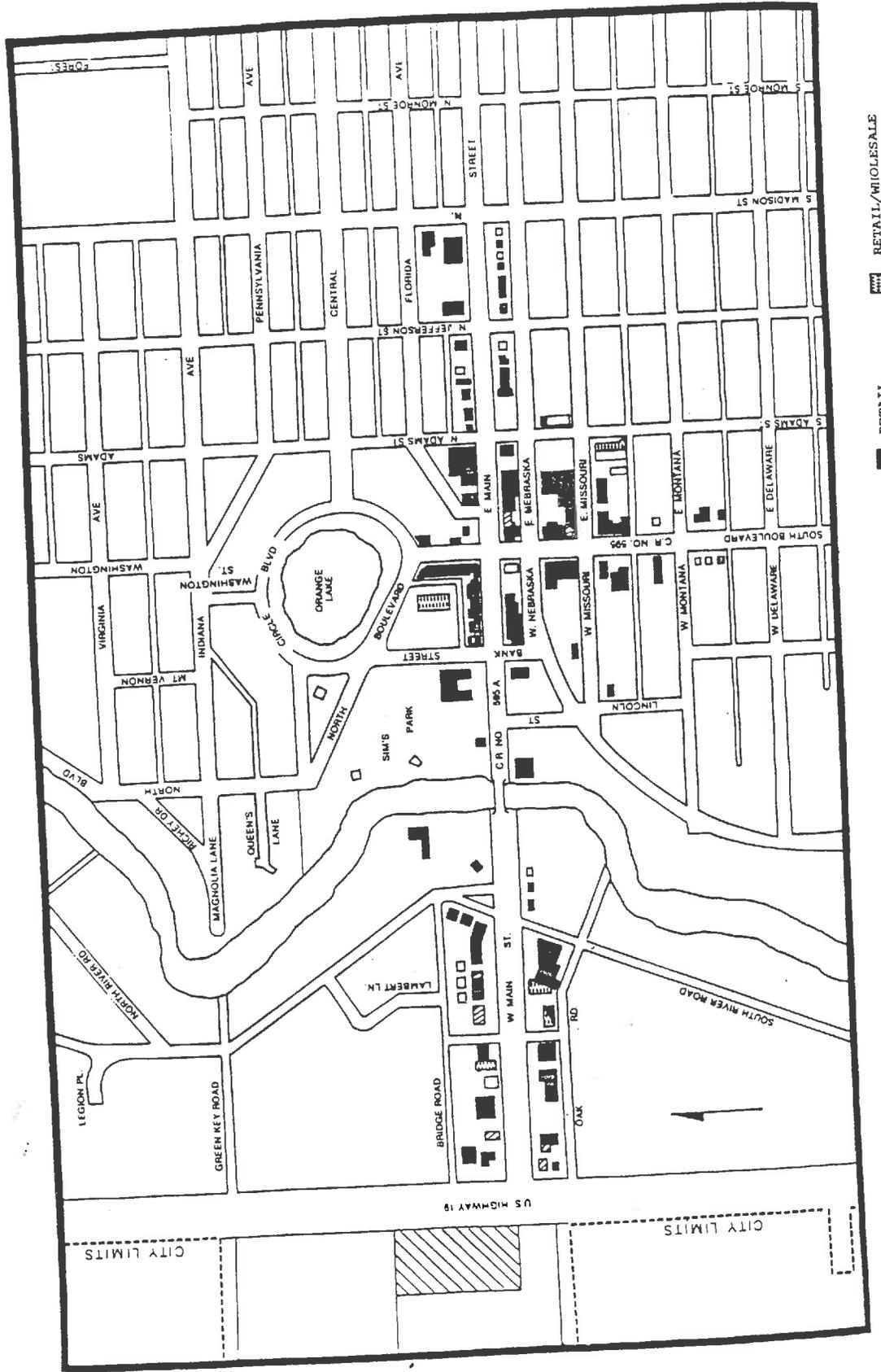
Although there is a concentration of retail establishments in the Main/Boulevard area, service establishments dominate the area. There is a total of two dozen retail establishments in the east portion of downtown (east of the river).

TWO-STORY
THREE-STORY



800
400
0
SCALE IN FEET

FIGURE 9
TYPE OF BUSINESS



They include six restaurants, two taverns, and other retail businesses offering the following goods:

- Packaged Food
- Sporting Goods
- Christian Supplies
- Eyewear
- Toys, Games, and Craft Items
- Art and Drafting Supplies
- Hardware Goods
- Interior Decorations
- Locks and Keys
- Pharmaceuticals
- Gasoline
- Hats
- Consignment Goods
- Office Supplies
- Health Care Supplies
- Fire and Safety Equipment

The west portion of downtown includes among its retail establishments two restaurants, a tavern, and businesses offering the following goods.

- Flowers and Floral Arrangements
- Ceiling Fans
- Party Supplies
- Collectors Item Baseball Cards
- Jewelry
- Televisions
- Office Supplies
- Lumber and Hardware Goods
- Drafting Supplies
- Wigs

Conspicuous by its absence is apparel sales. There are no clothing stores in either portion of downtown (with the exception of any clothing which may be sold at the consignment shop on East Main). Another significant absence is that of a supermarket. Downtown's lone supermarket closed several years ago after changing hands several times in its last few years.

For the entire downtown, the total number of personal, business and professional service establishments exceeds the total number of retail establishments by more than two to one. There are over 100 service establishments as opposed to 44 retail establishments. This is not a negative ratio. Service establishments do as much to draw people downtown as do retail. They contribute to the tax base and the "downtown population". Their employees patronize neighboring service and retail establishments. In general, service establishments should not be viewed as less desirable than retail.

RETAIL/WHOLESALE
VACANT

RETAIL
SERVICE

800
400
0
SCALE IN FEET

The disadvantage of service sector domination is rooted in the type of activity it creates. Professional offices generally do not attract large numbers of people, nor do they usually remain open in the evening. This results in flurries of activity when employees are coming to or leaving their workplace, and during the lunch hour. Otherwise, service firms do little to stimulate evening or weekend activity. As a result, downtown "rolls up the sidewalks" at 5:00 p.m. when service firms, and offices in particular, close. (Note: One exception to that rule is recreational establishments, which are classified as service firms. Fitness centers, dance studios and so forth actually stimulate evening and weekend activity.)

Retail firms, on the other hand, lend a more vibrant atmosphere. Shoppers browse along storefronts and are attracted to a retail area at all hours of the day, evening, and weekend. Window displays provide an ever-changing visual attraction, if well done. There is a more constant flow of people and activity that in turn stimulates even greater activity from those who simply like to "people watch". And retail goods are more conducive to inspiring unplanned impulse purchases than are services.

The case for bringing back retail activity can be subdivided into two elements, wants and needs. On one hand, it can be argued that downtown is the neighborhood shopping center for nearby residents. These people have basic needs -- for goods such as food, medicine, and clothing -- that downtown should fulfill. This is particularly true for residents who have mobility problems. On the other hand, the opportunity to fulfill the wants of residents can be a powerful motivation. A vast pool of disposable income exists in the city and surrounding environs. If downtown is to avoid the rolled-up sidewalk scenario, and if it is to avoid losing its architecturally significant buildings to neglect and disinvestment, it must offer a more active and diversified economic base.

TOPOGRAPHY/PHYSIOGRAPHY

Downtown New Port Richey is located in the Gulf Coastal Lowlands, as classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service. The study area lies 1.4 to 2.1 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico. Elevations in the study area range from 7.5 to approximately 20 feet above sea level. Terrain is level to gently sloping, with slopes of 0-5 percent.

Soils are Tavares-Urban Land Complex. This is a moderately well drained sand to a depth of 80 inches or more, with underlying limestone bedrock. Soil permeability is very rapid and natural fertility is low. The Tavares soils are medium- to very-strongly acidic. It should be noted, however, that the U.S. Soil Conservation Service's soil survey indicates that past construction has radically altered soils in the Urban Land Complex category. Consequently, it is difficult to anticipate soil conditions that may pose a constraint for redevelopment without testing of individual sites.

POLICE AND FIRE PROTECTION

The downtown is well-served by the city's police and fire departments. The fire station is located at the east end of the study area at the corner of Madison Street and Florida Avenue, directly behind City Hall. The fire department has two one-thousand gallon capacity engine trucks with the ability to fight fires up to three floors. The police headquarters are located one-half mile south of downtown at South Boulevard and Louisiana Avenue.

CULTURAL AMENITIES

The Richey Suncoast Theater, built in 1926 as a silent movie venue, is the primary cultural attraction in New Port Richey. The theater is located one block south of Main Street on the Boulevard, and seats 328. The theater offers live stage productions, free monthly musical performances, childrens drama camps, and performances by out-of-town performing arts groups such as the Tampa Ballet.

The city operates a 6,000 square foot library at the corner of East Main and Jefferson. The library will be approximately doubled in size as part of the City Hall expansion project. Total circulation for fiscal year 1985-86 was nearly 100,000 volumes. The library offers a large print section for the visually-impaired, childrens' programs, and is in the process of computerizing its catalog of 40-45,000 volumes.

The West Pasco Historical Society is located on the periphery of Sims Park in a historic schoolhouse relocated from the Seven Springs area. The society owns an extensive collection of books, photographs, and household and personal items from the area's past. Included are rare photographs of the downtown as it was developed in the early decades of this century.

Several events occur periodically throughout the year, most of the taking place in Sims Park. The week-long Chasco Fiesta dates back to 1922, while the Celebration of the Arts has expanded in its third year to include not only artists, craftsmen, and musicians, but also food, games, and other forms of entertainment. The Pasco Fine Arts Council, an organization devoted to promoting art and art education, sponsors Celebration of the Arts. The Annual Antique Auto Show and Swap Meet is entering its eleventh year, with over 150 autos on display.

Periodic performances are also sponsored by local groups such as the Suncoast Ballet Theater and the Pasco Opera Society.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

The group which has had the most visible impact in downtown recently is the newly-formed New Port Richey Community Cooperative. The Cooperative has taken initial steps towards applying to the Florida Main Street Program, which is modelled

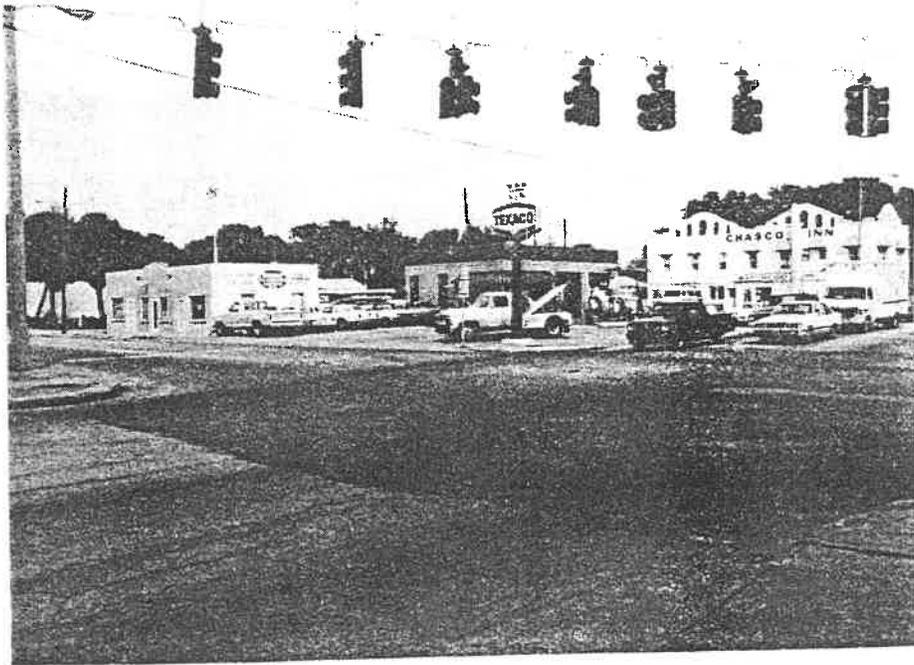
after the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Program. Many of the Cooperative's members were involved with the Chamber of Commerce's Downtown Beautification Committee that raised money for street plantings. The Cooperative has recently raised money for nine trash receptacles for the downtown, and billing itself as the "Main Street Connection", has organized local restaurants to provide a food tent for the Celebration of the Arts festival in Sims Park.

Other long-term plans envisioned by the Cooperative include further landscaping in downtown, gazebos for the Orange Lake area, a concession stand and canoe rentals for the Pithlachascotee River, a "Downtown Days" sales promotion event, and a landscaped gateway at the intersection of U.S. 19 and West Main Street. The Cooperative has incorporated as a non-profit organization, and has adopted a logo which features a drawing of the facade of the Richey Suncoast Theater.

The West Pasco Chamber of Commerce has been influential in bringing the business community together to improve downtown through its Committee of 100 and Downtown Beautification Committee.

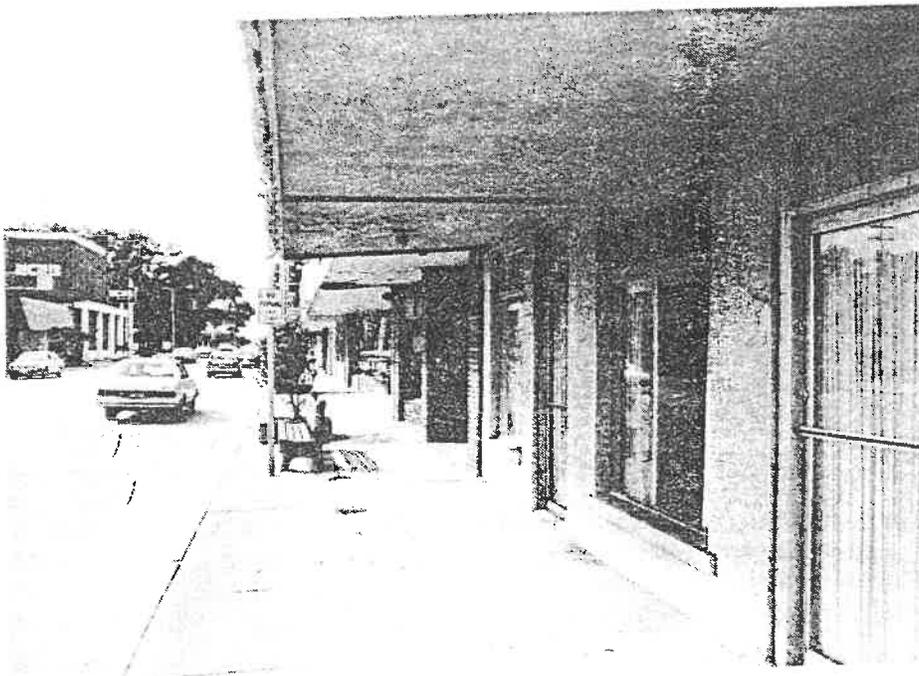
The standard array of civic, business, homeowners, and recreational associations exist in numerous supply within New Port Richey. Several have participated in programs that take place in and have benefitted downtown. However, they are too numerous to list here.

PHOTOGRAPH 1



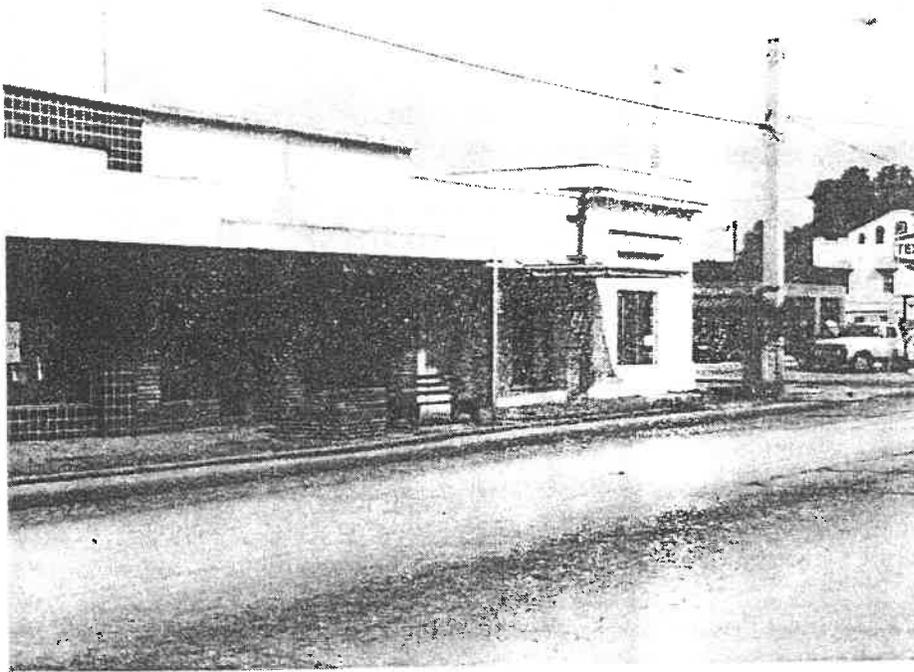
N.E. corner of Main/Boulevard intersection, the center of Downtown New Port Richey. There is potential for aesthetic improvement at this highly visible site.

PHOTOGRAPH 2



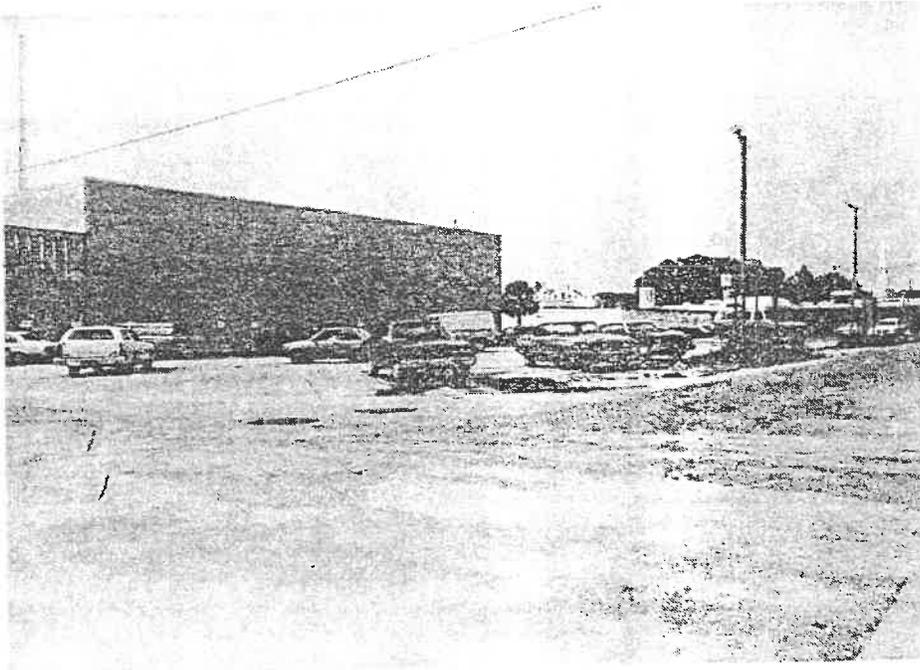
The 100 block of W. Main St., showing examples of sidewalk canopies, curtained office windows, and proximity of traffic to the sidewalks.

PHOTOGRAPH 3



The 100 block of W. Main St., showing the variety of building materials used in facades, the one-story scale of the buildings, and the lack of signage or displays on buildings used for offices.

PHOTOGRAPH 4



N.W. corner of Adams and Missouri, showing the lack of curbs, sidewalks, and landscaping. Without trees, the parking lot is barren.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS: PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Two key user groups populate the downtown. The first is the merchants and professionals (hereafter called "merchants") who operate stores, offices, and other establishments there. In effect, they use downtown locations and economics to pursue profit motives. The second group is made up of the residents of the city, who either use the goods and services offered in downtown New Port Richey, or consciously choose to go elsewhere to obtain those goods and services. Both groups have fundamental insights into what is positive and negative about downtown. It is of the utmost importance to incorporate these insights into any plan for revitalization. For that reason, surveys were conducted among both user groups.

SURVEYS OF RESIDENTS AND MERCHANTS

Separate surveys were designed and administered to the two groups in order to address the unique concerns of each. Samples of the blank questionnaires, along with complete survey results, are attached as Appendix B.

It is important to note that the 42 resident responses and the 49 merchant responses do not represent a statistically reliable sample. Approximately 375 resident responses and 107 merchant responses would be needed to obtain a statistically reliable sample of the 6,000+ city households and the 147 downtown merchants and professionals. Such a sample was determined to be beyond the scope and timeframe of this report. Hence, the information revealed in the survey results is qualitative rather than quantitative. It is meant to identify issues and areas of concern, rather than to quantitatively measure opinions for or against those issues. The percentages of responses in each category should not be considered an absolutely accurate reflection of overall resident and merchant attitudes.

Results of Survey of Residents

Residential addresses throughout the city were picked randomly from the Polk Company Street Directory, in order to obtain a geographically scattered sample. Of the more than 200 questionnaires that were mailed out, nine percent were returned by the Post Office as being vacant houses. Forty-two completed surveys were returned, resulting in a 22 percent response rate.

Residents were first asked how often they come downtown and for what reasons. Several notable observations can be made from the responses. On the positive side, downtown draws people most frequently (three or more times per month) for such activities as dining, doing errands such as banking, and for general socializing.

There is also a core of residents -- approximately one out of every five -- who shop downtown at least once per week. On the other hand, nearly six out of ten people never shop downtown, and three out of four residents shop downtown less than once per month. This highlights the narrow drawing power the retail sector presently displays.

There is potential for improvement: thirty percent of the people said they would shop downtown more often if stores were open more evenings. Another thirty percent were undecided, while forty percent said more evening hours would not induce them to shop there more often. If a good portion of the undecided group can be swayed, there is a strong possibility of improving the patronage of downtown stores while simultaneously stimulating important evening activity.

Another key observation is the number of downtown trips generated by professionals such as doctors and lawyers. Ninety-three percent of the respondents said they come downtown less than once per month to see a professional. This is of particular importance because of the number of professionals already located in downtown. While there are unquestionably many positive aspects of having professionals in downtown, it is apparent that they generate less activity than do retail or service sector establishments.

The vast majority of residents (six out of seven) drive when they go downtown. Forty percent said they sometimes walk downtown. One out of seven said they always walk -- never drive -- downtown. This could indicate either that they are situated so close to downtown that driving is unnecessary, or that there is a core group of people who, for lack of a car, must do all of their shopping errands in downtown. The most important factor, though, is to realize the role of the auto in transporting people downtown. The vast majority of people who come downtown come in cars, and as some of the following results reveal, the related issues of parking and traffic flow are therefore quite important.

The respondents then rated the appearance and offerings of downtown. An average score was computed for each issue, with 5 being the highest possible score, 3 being average, and 1 the lowest possible score. No issue had an above average score. The highest scores were given to the cleanliness of streets and sidewalks (2.98), smoothness of traffic flow (2.85), and appearance of building exteriors (2.75). The lowest ratings were given to the variety of goods and services (1.83), availability of parking (2.46), and convenience of business hours (2.51). The fact that the selection of goods and services had an average score considerably lower than any other issue (and well below average) is an extremely important finding. Residents have a very low regard for the array of goods and services offered in downtown New Port Richey.

When asked what building, business, or landmark first comes to mind when downtown is mentioned, the most frequent answer was NCNB Bank. City Hall, Orange Lake, the Rock & Spence Building, and the NPR Library followed. These responses provide some insight into the image people have of downtown. The reaction to the mention of downtown is to think of it in a utilitarian sense. That is to say, that the institutions that people use for everyday tasks received more mention than did more enjoyable amenities, such as Sims Park.

Yet when asked what they like best about downtown, the most frequent answers were Sims Park, the trees, the restaurants, and Orange Lake. This indicates that people enjoy the amenities of downtown, but do not immediately associate them with the mention of downtown.

Overwhelmingly, the residents said that the greatest problem in downtown is the lack of retail variety. The parking situation and the lack of a grocery store were the next issues most frequently mentioned. No other issue came close to attracting as many mentions as those three. It is clear that the retail situation is a major source of concern and frustration among city residents. This was echoed in a question which asked the following: "What is downtown's greatest disadvantage in competing against other shopping areas?" Again, the retail mix was by far the most frequent answer. Parking came in a distant second. Improving the retail mix was again the prominent issue when the people were asked what should be the goal for improving downtown. Improving parking and retaining a quaint atmosphere finished as distant runners-up.

When asked what they thought downtown's greatest advantage is, relative to other shopping areas, most people responded that there was no advantage. Others responded that the locational convenience, the friendly people, and the opportunity to avoid driving on U.S. 19 were all advantages of shopping in downtown. These perceived advantages should be incorporated in messages advertising the downtown.

The business that people would most like to see move into downtown is a grocery store. There was immense support for the return of a supermarket, although others are located nearby on U.S. 19. Clothing stores, variety stores, and department stores also received frequent mentions. Among the other ideas offered were stores selling books, ice cream, and videocassette rentals.

Finally, the respondents were asked what they thought the city government should do to help revitalization efforts. The most frequent answers were to extend the street landscaping program, improve the parking situation, and aid businesses in making store renovations. Several other answers, ranging from the thoughtful to the impossible, received less frequent mentions. They are listed in Appendix B under Question 13 of the Resident Survey.

Results of Survey of Downtown Merchants and Professionals

A second survey was designed which addressed issues of particular concern to merchants and professionals. Approximately 130 of the 150 merchants and professionals in downtown were sent a survey, of which 49 were returned. This response rate of 38 percent, unaided by follow-up phone calls, is in itself a positive indication of the level of interest in revitalization.

The merchants and professionals were generally more positive in their views than were the residents, although the concerns of both merchants and residents are strikingly similar. Both of the groups surveyed identified virtually the same strengths and weaknesses in downtown.

The two problems that merchants are most concerned with are the retail mix and parking, much like the residents. The merchants, however, rate parking as the number one problem, whereas the residents felt retail mix was a worse problem than parking. The merchants were also very concerned with traffic flow, vacant and/or unattractive buildings, and disruptive youths and transients.

The one thing merchants like most about downtown is its location. More than half of those surveyed mentioned that downtown is centrally located and easy to find. Other positive characteristics frequently mentioned were the river, park, and natural environment; the quaint, personal and friendly atmosphere; and the sense of history created by the older buildings. These positive attributes need to be incorporated into promotional efforts for downtown, as should the attributes identified by the residents.

The merchants and professionals were asked to rate the same issues and aspects of downtown as were the residents, and many of the results were quite similar. Using the average scores as a means of comparison, it can be seen that the merchants agreed with the residents that the appearance factors in downtown are below average (a score of three out of five is average). The merchants are more critical of the appearance of building exteriors, but less critical of downtown's overall attractiveness.

The merchants and residents agreed that the variety of goods and services and the availability of parking are the two worst problems, although the merchants do not perceive those situations to be as severe as the residents do. While 55 percent of the residents gave retail mix the lowest possible rating, only 28 percent of the merchants did so. And while 37 percent of the residents gave parking the lowest rating, 25 percent of the merchants did so.

Merchants also have a considerably higher evaluation of the convenience of the existing business hours and the cost of goods and services. Both issues were rated better than average by the business community. Business hours were given a 3.43 average rating by merchants, the highest score of any of the topics, and cost of goods and services had an average score of 3.15.

A series of questions asked the merchants and professionals to address the future of downtown. When asked what they thought the goal for improving downtown should be, there was almost equal support for three issues: continued renovation of buildings; attraction of new businesses (primarily specialty retail); and continuation of efforts for a general cleanup/facelift and improvement of appearance. Surprisingly, improving the parking situation received very few mentions. Among the new businesses that merchants would most like to see attracted to downtown are a grocery store, a clothing retailer, variety and gift stores, and more "quality" restaurants.

The merchants and professionals were asked if they would favor or oppose several potential strategies for revitalization. Among them were signage, building height, and facade renovation controls, streetscape improvements, parking meters, and additional parking lots. The strongest positive reaction (77 percent strongly in favor) was received by streetscape improvements (trees, benches, new sidewalks, et cetera), while a negative reaction was generated by the idea of putting parking meters on the streets of downtown (71 percent strongly opposed this notion). Signage and storefront renovation controls received markedly positive reactions, with nearly eighty percent in favor of each type of control. Storefront (facade) renovation controls were well-supported, with more than half of the respondents saying they strongly favor such a program. This latter figure is a somewhat surprising and very encouraging result.

Finally, the merchants were asked what types of improvements the city government should undertake. As should be expected from a group which has such a vested interest in the revitalization of downtown, there was a wealth of ideas forthcoming. Most frequently mentioned streetscape improvements, including more trees, pedestrian-oriented streetlights, repaving, and brick sidewalks. Other ideas, ranging from improving the retail mix to multi-story parking ramps, are included in the survey appendix.

Several characteristics of the merchants themselves were revealed, and for the most part the statistics are encouraging. Almost half of the merchants own the building in which they are located, and another third rent on a long-term lease. This indicates a strong commitment to staying in the downtown area. There is a healthy mix of old and new businesses, (with 44 percent having been located in downtown for less than five years, and 41 percent having been in a downtown location for more than ten years.)

It is positive to note that more than three-quarters of the respondents have no intention of relocating, despite the fact that one out of every three has a space shortage. Twenty-four percent said they have expansion plans. These last figures highlight that while it is beneficial to attract new companies, it is crucially important to help address the needs of businesses that are already located in the community. Not only are these businesses taxpayers and employers, but it will be increasingly difficult to attract new business if existing ones are have unmet needs.

The stated desire to remain in downtown may seem somewhat surprising, particularly when more than two-thirds of the merchants said they draw the majority of their customers from outside of the city. However, the business climate in downtown is obviously a very positive one, because only two percent of the merchants said they have experienced a decrease in business activity over the last three years. With nearly two-thirds of the merchants citing increasing business activity during that period, it is apparent that downtown is a location from which a fairly large trade area and a growing business can be maintained.

A SITE-SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Although many of the following issues have been alluded to or discussed to varying degrees in earlier sections, it is the intent of this section to "inventory" the problems and opportunities and draw them all together in a form where issues discussed in the surveys can be pin-pointed to specific locations. Rather than list all of the negatives at once, followed by all the positives, or vice versa, this discussion recognizes that there are both positives and negatives inherent in many issues. For example, a vacant lot represents an activity void and a hole in the "wall" of building fronts. On the other hand, it may also be a shady retreat from the man-made environment of buildings and pavement.

The following sections analyze the positive and negative features of the key elements in revitalizing downtown.

Retail and the Role of Downtown

As the issue identified in the surveys as the foremost problem in downtown, it is logical to begin by examining the retail mix. The selection of goods and services available is a problem rooted in economics. The cost of downtown land, the lack of vast amounts of land for parking, the fragmented nature of land ownership, and stiff competition from nearby shopping centers on U.S. 19 all work against attracting a major retailer to downtown. Several survey respondents said that downtown needs a K-Mart or similar large department store. This is not likely to happen, nor is it desirable, because the amount of land usually required by a major retailer would swallow up half of downtown and utterly destroy the pedestrian nature of the area. The same situation holds true for attracting the oft-mentioned grocery store that survey respondents feel is needed.

A more likely scenario would be to attract smaller shops which can move into existing storefronts or new buildings which would be more harmonious with the existing historic buildings than a land-intensive structure like a K-Mart or a Publix. While the smaller shops do not have the economic impact of a larger department store, they are less disruptive of the existing physical fabric of downtown, and offer an opportunity to differentiate downtown from the strip shopping centers along U.S. 19. It is therefore important to concentrate on recruiting the types of stores that are physically capable of fitting into downtown without disrupting it. Stores with low space requirements that can be satisfied by the land and buildings that currently exist, or by new buildings that are of similar size, should be recruited.

In determining what types of stores or businesses should be attracted to downtown, it is also necessary to think of adjacencies, wherein the enterprises that are attracted will complement the existing stores. Restaurants are successful and desirable because they complement the office population which seeks luncheon spots. Personal service establishments such as dry cleaners and shoe repair also offer convenience to workers. However, there already exists a suitable array of service establishments.

It is this last point which leads to the central question -- what is to be the role of downtown? Currently it is predominantly an office and personal service node and the retail element is overshadowed by its competitors on the highway. The first and foremost question is whether the residents of the city, and the elected officials who represent them, are content to let the current situation prevail. The interest in revitalization that has resulted in the commissioning of this study indicates that status quo is not acceptable. A brighter future for Downtown New Port Richey is achievable.

Yet how is that to be achieved? The current situation has resulted in a moderate number of building renovations, new businesses, and some new activities in recent years such as the Celebration of the Arts. But the situation is not ideal yet as there is still little pedestrian activity during the daytime and even less after 5 p.m. People come downtown to visit their doctor or lawyer, but they do this infrequently and rarely patronize other downtown businesses.

The key lies in having interesting enough stores, events, and attractions to draw people more often, and keep those that have come downtown there longer. One of the answers is to attract small shops that supply the kinds of goods that the survey respondents said they want. Grocery goods could be supplied by a small butcher shop, a gourmet foods shop, a bakery, or ethnic food shops. Clothing could be supplied by a small mens, womens, or childrens clothing shop. It is important to concentrate on finding retail operations that will draw people downtown frequently for items they use frequently, such as a bottle of fine wine or a video cassette rental, a deli sandwich or an ice cream cone, bagel or doughnut.

There already exists a large user base in downtown, including people that work there, people that use the services of downtown, or those who simply drive through on the way to other destinations. By improving the array of offerings, and doing so with goods that are needed (or wanted) on a frequent basis, it is possible to entice people to stay longer and spend money there. This will lend an air of excitement and activity.

A significant issue is the availability of storefronts for attracting new businesses. It is a major asset of the current situation that there are few vacant buildings. Downtown does not look like a ghost town. However, this also means that there are few locations for new businesses to move into. Too many of the small storefronts that would be ideal for a startup operation of a new retail business like those discussed earlier are occupied by offices. In order to attract new businesses, either new space must be built, or offices must be enticed to relocate to other downtown locations. One possibility is to renovate some of the existing vacant upper floor space, such as the second floor of the Pasco Hardware Building. Another is to construct new office space and offer incentives for offices to relocate there from the storefronts. Whatever method is employed, it is crucial that a minimum of ground floor space be occupied by offices. The sort of interesting visual environment that will attract shoppers is created by retail displays that draw people into stores, such as is done by Mallett Hardware, not by the curtained windows of offices as are found in much of the 100 block of West Main. (Please see photograph #11.)

Traffic and Parking

To the outside observer, the severity of these two issues are reversed from how they were rated in the surveys. Parking was rated the more severe constraint in the surveys, yet the situation can not be termed a serious problem when there is unused parking capacity within less than two blocks of every establishment in downtown. The parking situation could become more severe when revitalization accelerates, and that possibility is addressed in the following recommendations.

The small storefronts in and around the Main/Boulevard intersection are the ideal setting for locating new retail stores. This would push the North Bank Street lot to capacity, but only if employees continue to use that lot. The pressure on the North Bank Street lot can be substantially relieved by storeowners requiring their employees to use the Nebraska Street lot.

The greatest problem with the parking lots is not their location or size, but rather their appearance. The lots are massive asphalt voids which visually and functionally interrupt the activity that makes downtown interesting and lively. Visually their lack of greenery detracts from the natural setting of the park and river.

These parking lots are much less interesting than a well-decorated storefront or a well-designed building. Functionally, they do not generate activity, they merely accommodate it. The large expanses of pavement also affect the downtown micro-climate by radiating large amounts of heat in summer.

As a necessary means of accommodating auto-borne shoppers, land must continue to be devoted to parking. However, parking need not be the only use of that land. Placing structures above parking lots increases activity, generates tax revenue and store patrons, and provides a more interesting visual element. Where greater activity can not be accommodated, the visual aspect of lots can be improved through landscaping. (Please see photograph #4.) Ordinarily a combination of dense screen plantings (such as hedges) and a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees provide shade, absorb air pollutants, and provide visual and noise buffers. In this case dense screening is not desirable because the lots must be made more visible to people, not less. Some sparse screening may be acceptable without obscuring the lots.

All three city-owned lots are in tremendous need of landscaping. Several private lots are in also in need, such as the former grocery store lot now used primarily by General Telephone at East Nebraska and South Adams. The entire area west of the river needs plantings to shade and visually break up the expanse of pavement created by the road and storefront parking. With five lanes of pavement on that section of Main, and parking lots in front of most of the stores, there is a virtually unbroken sea of pavement that reaches 200 feet in width at some points. The west portion of downtown should act as a visual transition zone from U.S. 19 to the old section of downtown. It is not effectively performing that function right now. Landscaping, with tall shade trees lining the street, would provide a noticeable transition from the highway.

The traffic situation is arguably more serious than the surveys revealed. Both Main Street and Boulevard carry enough traffic on a continuous basis to make it dangerous for pedestrians to cross the street. The situation is most severe right at the intersection of Main and Boulevard. The 100 block of West Main is actually intimidating even when one is walking on the sidewalk. Cars are travelling at upwards of 30 miles per hour or more, within mere feet of pedestrians. The one-way east-west traffic system discussed earlier would alleviate much of that situation by allowing curbside parking, which would buffer pedestrians from traffic, and by reducing the number of directions of oncoming traffic from two to one. Pedestrian crosswalk lights are needed at the Main/Boulevard intersection, as well, to facilitate movement of shoppers.

Storefront Design

The so-called "modernization" of storefronts that has occurred throughout commercial areas nationwide over the last three decades does not lend an attractive character to most downtowns. The outstanding feature of New Port Richey's downtown in the area of design is the architecture of the older buildings. Where possible, the latter day fieldstone, wooden shakes, and siding should be eliminated, and more traditional materials such as brick and stucco used. The newer buildings should be compatible with their more historic counterparts, rather than overwhelm them.

The Wag-On Inn is one building which has most been victimized by alteration. The original brick exterior, which created a colorful and imposing presence at the main intersection, has been hidden by stucco, and its window openings filled in. The building has lost all of its architectural elements other than bulk. The sidewalk canopy that appears in old photographs has been replaced with a historically inaccurate and functionally inadequate canopy. The building's prominent location demands greater attention to rehabilitation and restoration of the structure's original design.

Most of the offices in the 100 block of West Main have either painted over windows or pulled drapes across them. This is highly detrimental to revitalization. The uninviting appearance of a closed window makes buildings look vacant, and provides nothing to encourage pedestrians to stop in the area. (Please see photograph #11 which shows an example of this.)

Facade restorations have proven to be a very visible means of making the general public aware of the renaissance that is occurring. Restorations received several positive comments on the surveys. Further work on the remaining historic structures, and renovations of newer buildings that is done in a manner that complements the older structures, will draw considerable attention and generate community pride.

Streetscape

The effect of barren stretches of pavement on the streetscape has already been discussed. Extension of the tree planting program should occur throughout downtown to add greenery. But plantings are only one element of streetscape.

There are few, if any, resting places in downtown. The benches that do exist are rarely used because they are placed only a few feet from traffic. (Please see photograph #2.) Shaded resting places that are set back from traffic are needed near City Hall and near the Main/Boulevard intersection. The former should be incorporated into the entrance plaza for the new City Hall, while the latter is provided for in the recommendations.

Streetlighting that primarily benefits pedestrians is currently non-existent. The cast iron Victorian lamps seen in many revitalization areas are not simply ornamental. They are set at such a height as to illuminate sidewalks for pedestrians, thereby encouraging night-time activity.

The brick pavement under the Boulevard presents an opportunity to add color to the paving. Color is lacking at the present time, with the exception of the brick planters installed as part of the tree planting program. Unfortunately, due to their height, the planters have already been damaged by cars and have made it difficult to open car doors. An alternative for the future is to use brick bands for color in the sidewalk paving that needs to be done in much of downtown, and use tree grates that are flush to the ground instead of foot-high planters.

Information kiosks are a means of conveying news of activities to pedestrians. Unused so far in New Port Richey, kiosks could be a valuable means of disseminating information.

Land Use

Considerable discussion has already been devoted to land uses such as retail, office, and parking. One major issue remains to be mentioned. While it is often an undesirable result of revitalization, displacement of existing businesses is often necessary in order to create the kind of environment that will attract people to the area. With this in mind, it is suggested that the gas station at the Main/Boulevard intersection is not the most desirable use of that prime site. (Please see photograph #1.) A service station, regardless of how well it is maintained, discourages pedestrian activity by creating irregular vehicular maneuvering. The station, by necessity, is dominated by pavement which detracts from the aesthetics of the center of downtown. The situation is exacerbated by the outdoor plumbing supply storage immediately behind the service station.

Two options are available. In a best case scenario (from the revitalization perspective), the station and the plumbing storage could be relocated to another site, and a small park placed on the site. The second scenario has the borders of the service station parcel and the plumbing storage yard heavily planted with trees to add a greenery element to the intersection. The cost to obtain the service station site is the major constraint to relocation. The parcel sold within the past 18 months for in excess of \$110,000, and demolition and park construction would likely double that amount. Extensive landscaping without relocating the service station or the plumbing storage is the less costly and most realistic alternative.

Other opportunities for improving the appearance and activity levels in downtown exist on scattered parcels. They include:

- The parcel immediately east of the Chasco Inn. The parcel is now vacant, has several mature shade trees, and could be packaged with buildings on either side because all three have the same owner.
- The parcel immediately west of the Altman law office. Again, this is a large lot virtually covered with mature shade trees.
- The city-owned land including the 24-car parking lot on West Missouri and the Shuffleboard Club site (which is owned by the city and leased to the Club) could be packaged with adjacent parcels to form a single large commercial/office site. This is one of the few centrally located sites which is occupied but underutilized.
- The McKendree Greens site is one whose use is not entirely conducive with a downtown area, (repair and storage of commercial mowing equipment), and could be redeveloped with parking at the ground level and office or residential space above.

Sims Park and Orange Lake

A number of problems can be identified in what are otherwise outstanding assets of downtown and the city. First, Sims Park presents a disorganized face to Main Street. The Waller-Mills law office building sits in the middle of the park's Main Street frontage, while the Hacienda occupies another large part of the frontage. Second, North Boulevard carries approximately 8,000 vehicles per day through the middle of the Sims Park/Orange Lake area. What could be one impressive natural setting becomes, in effect, two bisected traffic islands. (Please see photograph #14.)

Third, a large amount of the park's land, primarily the land alongside the river, is taken up by pavement. The two parking lots along the waterfront make it very convenient to get to the water, but they also despoil the natural setting. Finally, the seating area immediately in front of the bandshell is lacking in shade trees. This makes it prohibitively hot to sit in this area while daytime events are underway in the summer.

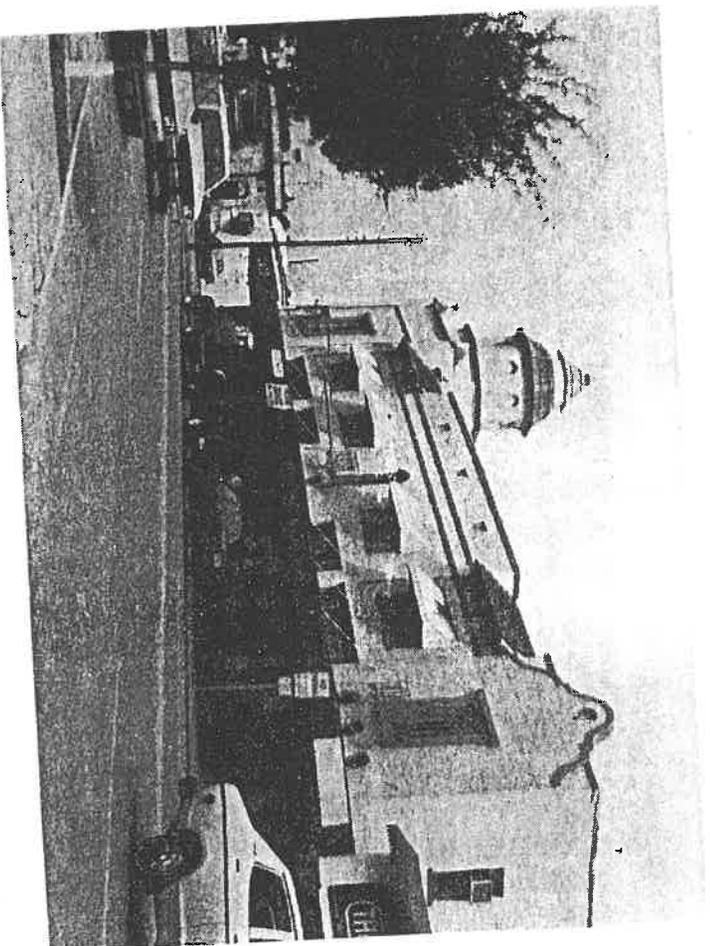
Moving parking lots to the periphery of the park and adding shade trees would be relatively inexpensive but very effective improvements. Relocating the law office and Boulevard traffic are considerably larger tasks, but they should not be ruled out.

Summary

Above all, it should be emphasized that New Port Richey is as close to achieving a revitalized downtown as is any city anywhere because the deterioration is not extensive. Certainly there are problems. But the opportunities are extensive, and the situation has been addressed at a point where a healthy downtown is a realistic possibility.

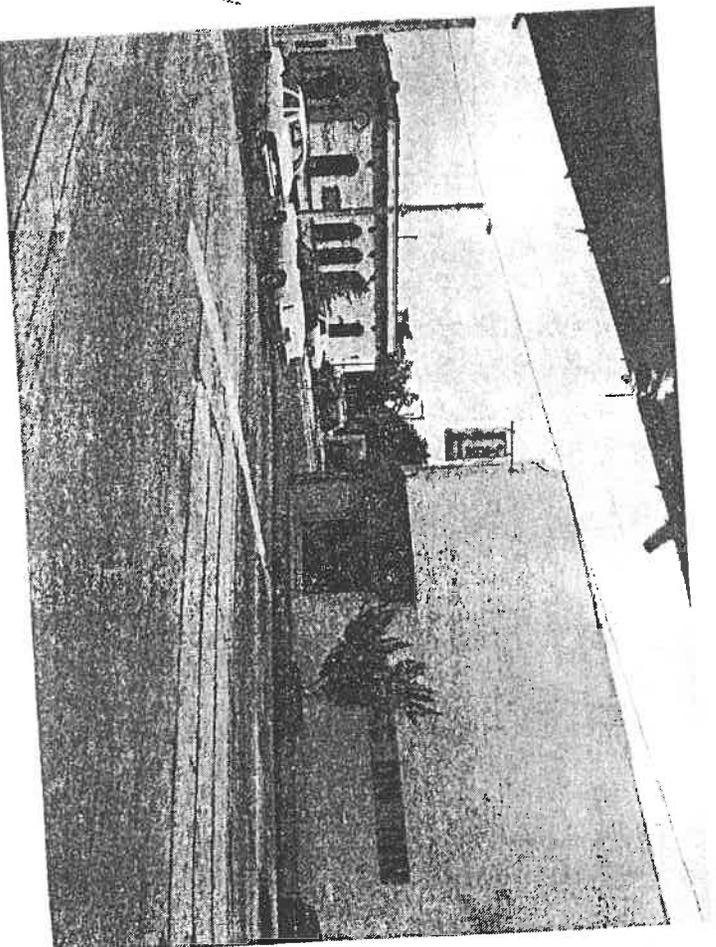
By comparison, urban expert Anthony Downs of the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. has devised a strategy for classifying areas according to their potential for recovery. The system is called "triage", to reflect its similarity to the battlefield medical practice of classifying patients according to their chance of survival. In a worst case, areas with the lowest chance of recovery are written off as hopeless, and funds are directed to areas with better chances of recovery. This has been a de facto policy of many governments, if not an expressed one. Under a system of triage, Downtown New Port Richey would unequivocally be classified as an area with a high chance of recovery.

PHOTOGRAPH 5



The Pasco Hardware Building (1926), an example of the Mediterranean-style of architecture that is common in downtown. The upper floor is largely unused, but the ground floor is vibrant.

PHOTOGRAPH 6



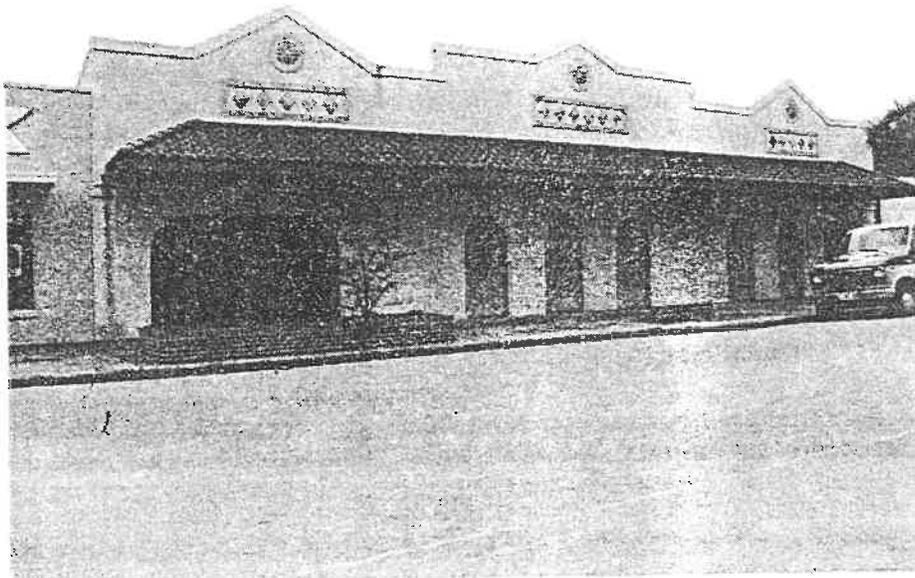
Two of downtown's oldest buildings. The Land Office (Rock & Spence) has been renovated (left), while the Clark Mercantile's (Wag-On Inn) windows and brick facade have been covered with stucco (right).

PHOTOGRAPH 7



An under-used municipal parking lot between W. Missouri and W. Nebraska. This is a potential site for leasing air rights for new construction that would stimulate activity.

PHOTOGRAPH 8



An attractively renovated building on E. Main which sits vacant. This building could house either one large store or three smaller shops. There is no signage to indicate that the building is available.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals for revitalizing downtown New Port Richey could vary from interest group to interest group. The single goal statement in bold type below has been chosen to convey a unanimity of purpose and singularity of direction for revitalizing downtown New Port Richey. The goal addresses both existing and future development, the public and private sectors' roles, and the optimal end result. The policies which follow the goal support the goal and can be used as a check list for public and private actions in the downtown area. All of the recommendations contained in the following section of the report further the goal and policies.

THE GOAL AND POLICIES OF THIS PLAN

The following goal and policies were devised by TBRPC staff and presented to the New Port Richey City Council for their comments on September 9, 1986. The Council did not recommend any changes at that time. The overall goal of the plan is to:

ENSURE PROPER MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOWNTOWN BY PURSUING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE IMPROVEMENTS WHICH WILL RESTORE VITALITY AND RESPECT THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

Nine policies have been identified to achieve the overall goal. These policies focus on the primary issues for which recommendations are developed. These policy areas are derived from accepted revitalization theory and are tailored to address the relevant issues in New Port Richey. No prioritization is attached to the policies. The issues and policies are:

- RETAIL - Enhance the retail component of downtown through attraction of complementary retail activity and uses.
- HISTORIC - Protect and enhance the historic character of downtown by assisting in the renovation of existing buildings and providing design guidelines for renovation and new construction.
- CULTURAL/ENTERTAINMENT - Increase the role of downtown as the cultural and entertainment focal point for the city.
- RECREATION - Preserve the integrity and natural setting of Sims Park by minimizing vehicular and commercial intrusions.
- NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - Extend the natural setting offered by the Pithlachascotee River and Sims Park by means of extensive street plantings.
- ZONING AND LAND USE - Adopt and enforce land use regulations which limit uses of downtown land to those activities which will contribute to a vibrant, consumer-oriented atmosphere, without sacrificing the area's historic character.

- SIGNAGE - Reduce confusion and visual clutter, strengthen the area's identity, and increase awareness of public and private facilities through control of the size, placement, and related aspects of signage.
- TRANSPORTATION - Ensure safe and efficient traffic flow which facilitates access to downtown and surrounding areas.
- PARKING - Ensure adequate provision of public parking, increase public awareness of these facilities, and ensure compatibility of public and private parking lots with surrounding environs.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATE, REGIONAL AND LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

The Growth Management Act of 1985 (as amended) increased the emphasis on intergovernmental coordination in planning by mandating that Local Government Comprehensive Plans must be consistent with the Florida State Comprehensive Plan and the appropriate Regional Comprehensive Policy Plan.

As such, the goal, policies and recommendations contained in this report are consistent with 1985 Florida State Comprehensive Plan, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's adopted policy statement, Future of the Region, and the Council's proposed Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan for the Tampa Bay Region.

Specifically, this all material contained in this report furthers the following State and Regional Goals:

State Goal #10 - Natural Systems and Recreational Lands
 Regional Goal - Adequate, accessible park and recreation facilities, properly maintained and managed.

State Goal #15 - Property Rights
 Regional Goal - The acquisition of private property for public use shall be made in a fair and equitable manner with just compensation to property owners.

State Goal #16 - Land Use
 Regional Goal - New urban development will occur on land which has the capacity to accommodate growth in an acceptable manner in terms of environmental and infrastructural impacts.

Regional Goal - Redevelopment shall be limited to areas which have been identified as economically and environmentally suitable and desirable.

Regional Goal - Commercial development will occur in a planned and orderly fashion.

Regional Goal - Accessible park and recreational lands for passive and active recreation shall be available for all persons.

State Goal #17 - Public Facilities
Regional Goal - Maximizing the use of existing public facilities and reducing their costs through increased efficiency and identifying new stable sources of funding.

State Goal #18 - Cultural and Historic Resources
Regional Goal - Increase the promotion of, and public participation in the region's arts, culture, and historic resources.

Regional Goal - Develop cooperative links among the arts industry, historical attractions, tourism, and other sectors of the business and governmental communities.

Regional Goal - Efforts to promote and preserve the rich cultural, historical, and archaeological of the region will be increased.

State Goal #19 - Transportation

Regional Goal - Establishment of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as part of the regional transportation system.

State Goal #21 - The Economy

Regional Goal - There will be increased regional economic development through small and minority-owned business activity and cooperation among the economic sectors.

State Goal #23 - Tourism

Regional Goal - There should be an increase in the acquisition of public lands for recreational purposes.

The goal, policies and recommendations set forth here are also consistent with the City of New Port Richey's adopted Master Plan, the 1979 Comprehensive Planning Study. This revitalization plan is specifically consistent with the Master Plan where the latter document's Future Land Use Plan called for the following:

- Rehabilitation and restoration of buildings of historical character as functional features in the central business district.
- Creating a visual theme for the core area as a means to enhance its aesthetic character.
- Redesigning Sims Park to provide increased open space and opportunities as a principal city node.
- Conduct a general "face-lifting" of the stable structures within the central business district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following sets forth recommendations for revitalizing Downtown New Port Richey. These recommendations are the first step to successful revitalization as a later study would identify cost factors, specific steps and an implementation schedule. Further, unless otherwise noted, the Community Cooperative is the appropriate group to spearhead the revitalization effort, especially since this group represents downtown merchants and can draw the affected parties into the process.

The recommendations are organized into the following sections:

- Retail Development, Marketing, and Promotion
- Facade and Streetscape Improvements
- Zoning and Land Use
- Traffic and Parking Improvements
- Improvements to Sims Park

Retail Development, Marketing, and Promotion

These recommendations specifically are aimed at attracting new businesses and new events and enhancing downtown's image.

- A BUSINESS RECRUITMENT TEAM could be formed to visit neighboring communities and attempt to interest out-of-town businessmen and entrepreneurs in establishing commercial operations in downtown New Port Richey. This team should preferably be made up of local businessmen who can provide a peer's perspective of doing business in the downtown. The team need not be limited to a local recruiting area. Recruiting regionally or beyond is desirable if funding is available.
- A DOWNTOWN DATA BASE could be established and maintained, providing information on land and buildings that are currently available, their assessed value, size, and location, owner's name, et cetera. The data base could also include information on tax rates, financing programs that are available, the names and size of local banks, public services such as police and fire, a list of key public officials, and demographic data. The data base will be the main tool for the recruitment team, and should be printed in a high quality for distribution among prospective merchants.
- A distinctive LOGO could be adopted for purposes of marketing downtown New Port Richey. The logo should be acceptable to the majority of merchants and professionals. It should project a unique image for the downtown, capitalizing on the city's positive advantages such as the blend of old and new, the natural beauty, and the small town charm. Such a logo has already been adopted by the Community Cooperative, incorporating the Richey Suncoast Theatre facade. A possible alternative is the cupola of the Pasco Hardware Building, which is lighter in appearance than the theatre, or to combine the two buildings in one logo.

The logo could be employed in printed advertising, signage identifying the downtown area, and other promotional efforts. A logo design contest could be held to stimulate knowledge of and participation in revitalization efforts. The logo would be of great importance and value if placed at the U.S. 19/West Main intersection to attract shoppers from the highway.

- Similarly, a SLOGAN could be adopted that can be used in advertising to convey a well-defined image of the downtown. The slogan should be concise (five to six words or less). It should convey the unique aspects of downtown, such as the architecture, Sims Park, the friendly small town atmosphere, and the accessibility. The slogan should utilize the survey results in Appendix A, regarding the things people like best about downtown.

It is important to realize that the logo and slogan are image-building tools, used to create a perception of what downtown is all about. Consequently, great care should be exercised in choosing these items.

- A DIRECTORY OF DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES could be maintained. A list of businesses has been compiled for this report, and is attached as Appendix C. An annual report of BUSINESS BIRTHS AND DEATHS should be compiled by examining the additions to and deletions from the list each year. This will allow the recruitment team to assess what types of business have been successful and unsuccessful, and to thereby target their efforts more accurately.
- The survey of merchants and professionals revealed considerable interest in COOPERATIVE ADVERTISING. This is an excellent opportunity to inform the public of the array of goods and services that are offered downtown, and to do it in a cost efficient manner. Maps of the area, pinpointing the location of various merchants and professionals, the location of parking, and various non-commercial amenities such as Sims Park, should be included in the advertising. Brochures which include the downtown map and list of businesses should also be available in stores and at events (and possibly for mass mailing).
- A DOWNTOWN EVENTS PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE could be established to promote events and to lend organizational and promotional expertise to other groups which want to schedule events downtown.

The greatest opportunities lie in increasing utilization of Sims Park and the Richey Suncoast Theatre for attracting performing arts groups and other forms of audio-visual entertainment. Film festivals, bandshell concerts, and touring performing groups seem to be rare occurrences despite the excellent facilities that are available. Corporate sponsors could be recruited from the community to help defray expenses.

The city's association with the arts is a strong one, dating back to the Hollywood celebrities that frequented the city in the 1920s. The Richey Suncoast Theatre has perpetuated the city's image as a cultural center. This association should be promoted and built upon by scheduling a greater number and range of events. It can be an integral ingredient in shaping the image of the city and downtown.

- WALKING TOURS of downtown, including discussions of the history of the city's development, the events that shaped the city, the history of various buildings, and so forth, could be held by the Historical Society. Tales of the many celebrities who frequented the Hacienda Hotel, the various uses Orange Lake has experienced (racetrack, golf course, etc.) and other local facts and tales could be used to enliven monthly tours of downtown.
- PLACE "DOWNTOWN DIRECTORIES" IN KEY LOCATIONS. An illuminated display case with a map of downtown showing the location of merchants and professionals could be placed at two or three key locations. One would be the entrance plaza at the new City Hall. A second directory could be located in a proposed pocket park in the 100 block of West Main (see the Streetscape Recommendations for further discussion of the pocket park).

Facade and Streetscape Improvements

These recommendations focus on the appearance of buildings and public right-of-ways. An attractive environment is absolutely necessary to draw pedestrians and shoppers, as well as to exhibit to potential investors and business owners that there is a commitment to creating aesthetic and functional vibrancy.

- A FACADE RENOVATION PROGRAM could be established to provide low-interest financing and design advice for building owners interested in renovating their storefronts. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings should be adopted to provide direction as to how buildings should be renovated, altered, or expanded.

A LOW-INTEREST LOAN POOL could be established to assist in the financing of facade improvements. Banks in and near downtown (NCNB, First Savings, and Barnett) should be approached to either: 1) set aside loan pools at below-market rates; or 2) set aside money at market rates and devote city funds to write down the interest rate on the loans. In the latter case, city funds set aside for the facade program would be used to reimburse the borrower for part of the interest portion of his or her loan payment. In the former case, a possible scenario would have the city depositing a lump sum of General Reserve Funds in the banks, with the interest going toward a reduction in the rate the bank charges borrowers who are participating in the facade program.

DESIGN ASSISTANCE provided by local architects would be another element of the Facade Renovation Program. In order to ensure compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, a pool of local architects could be assembled who would be willing to work without fee or with minimal compensation to assist building owners in designing acceptable renovations.

Facade designs need not strictly comply with the Secretary's Standards if meeting those standards is cost prohibitive. Building owners should not be expected to risk their financial position by spending beyond their means so that an historically accurate facade treatment is accomplished. This is one place where the architect's expertise is helpful. By defining alternative designs that are sympathetic to the Secretary's Standards, yet cost effective, the architect can help identify the optimal design.

- Although difficult to enact and implement, SIGN CONTROL ORDINANCE could be adopted based on the prototype that is currently being developed by the University of Florida's Center for Governmental Responsibility. This model ordinance specifically states which types of signs are allowed or not allowed, basing those decisions on public safety and the effect of aesthetics on economic activity.

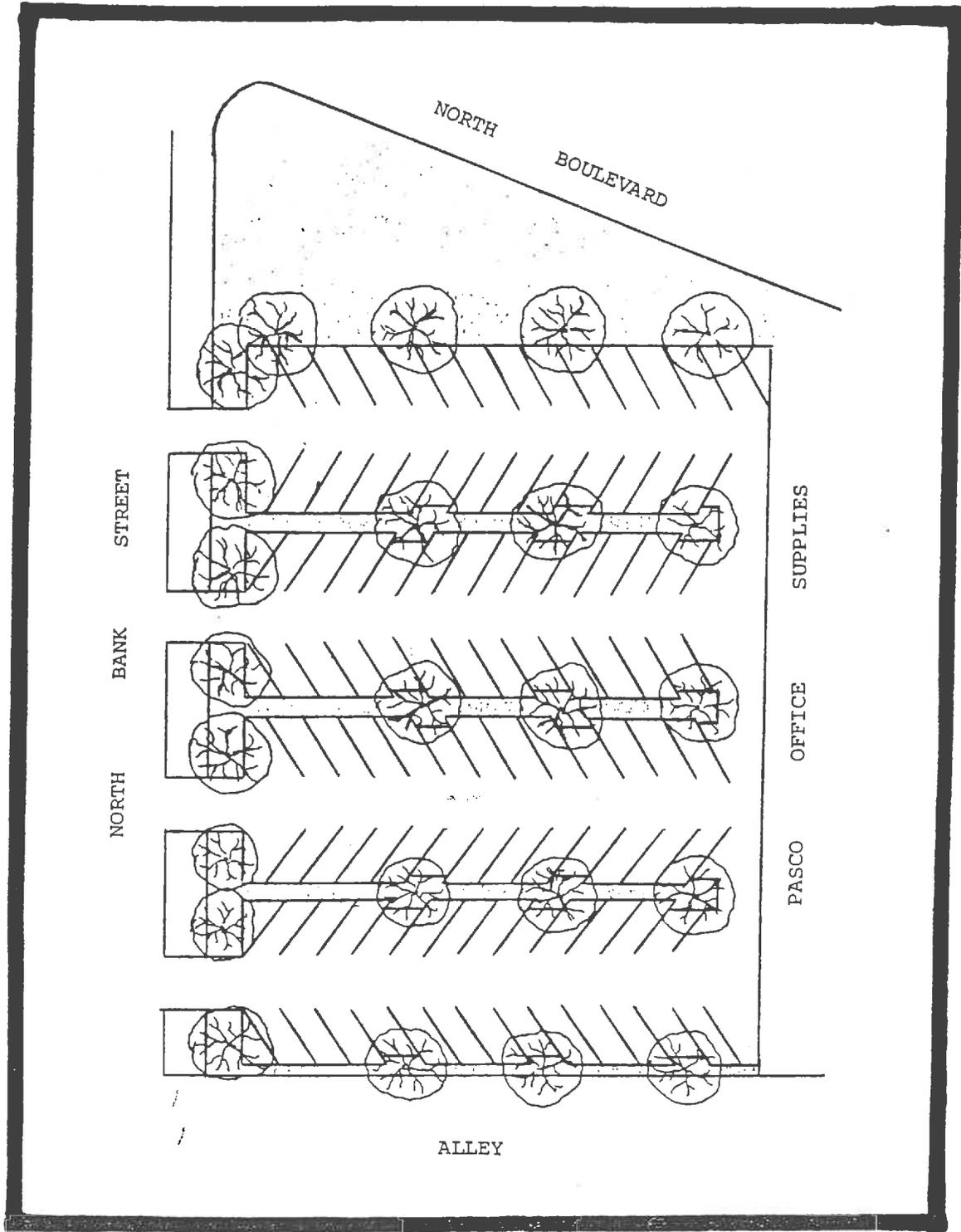
The ordinance sets guidelines for the size, placement, shape, and type of sign. It is by no means intended to dictate what types of signs may be used. The intent is to eliminate abuses by signs which are grossly oversized, thereby detracting from the natural and manmade environments, or by those which are dangerous due to their susceptibility to high winds or because they distract drivers.

- A LANDSCAPING PROGRAM could be a the cornerstone of an effort to increase the greenspace in downtown. For example, the TREE PLANTING PROGRAM begun by the Chamber's Downtown Beautification Committee could be extended to include all of the downtown. Particular areas of concern include Main Street west of the Pithlachascotee River and the city-owned parking lots. Other specific locations suitable for plantings include North Bank Street, North and South Adams Streets, and in selected locations along Nebraska and Missouri where the parking situation allows.

The municipal parking lots deserve special attention. They are noticeably devoid of shade and greenery. Trees could be planted along their street frontages, and inside the lots on tree islands. Tree islands can be made by shortening two parking spaces, forming the island from the inside 3-4 feet of each space, as shown in Figure 10. The shortened spaces would then be marked for "Compact Cars Only" so as to avoid larger cars from sticking out into the traffic lane.

FIGURE 10

EXAMPLE OF PARKING LOT LANDSCAPING



0 40
SCALE IN FEET

- UNCOVER ORIGINAL BRICK PAVING ON BOULEVARD AND MAIN STREET. If examination of test sites indicates that it is possible, it would greatly enhance the visual character of downtown to uncover the underlying brick pavement. The City's director of streets maintenance reports that the bricks extend from curb to curb on South Boulevard, and have a base of limerock which would be sufficient to support current traffic.

Using brick bands in sidewalk and brick crosswalks to add color and variety to the streets and sidewalks is another option. A narrow band of brick, approximately 2-3 feet wide alongside the curb, could be used on Main and Boulevard sidewalks as they are replaced.

- An ART IN PUBLIC PLACES COMMITTEE could be organized to encourage and facilitate the placing of art in public places such as sidewalks, Sims Park, City Hall, parking lot borders, and so on. Representatives of local art groups, such as the Pasco Fine Arts Council, should be included on the committee. Art need not be permanently placed in the various locations.
- NEGOTIATE THE LEASE OR PURCHASE OF THE FRONT TEN FEET OF THE WAG-ON INN PARKING LOT FOR CREATION OF A LANDSCAPED POCKET PARK. By using, for example, ten feet of the lot along the Main Street sidewalk, the city could build a small landscaped area for sitting and relaxing. Only two parking stalls would be displaced, and the gaping hole in the "wall" of building fronts along Main would be filled. The landscaping would also screen the parking lot from view. The preferred method for obtaining use of the land would be to offer a partial tax abatement to The Wag-On Inn.
- WIDEN OR CONSTRUCT SIDEWALKS IN DOWNTOWN THAT ARE CURRENTLY TOO NARROW OR NON-EXISTANT. In a handful of locations there are either no sidewalks, or existing sidewalks that are only three feet wide. Figure 7 provides a needs assessment for sidewalks in the downtown area.
- INSTALL WHEELCHAIR ACCESS RAMPS IN SIDEWALKS. There are currently no ramps allowing wheelchair-bound people to get onto and off of sidewalks. As deteriorating sidewalks are replaced there should be ramps installed. The new sidewalks on North Bank Street do not have ramps, either. This should be corrected.
- INSTALL "WALK/DON'T WALK" SIGNALS FOR PEDESTRIANS AT THE MAIN/BOULEVARD INTERSECTION. This is a confusing and dangerous intersection for pedestrians because of heavy traffic volume and turn movement. As revitalization occurs there will be heavier pedestrian and vehicular traffic, increasing the need to protect pedestrian safety.

Zoning and Land Use

This section outlines recommendations for controlling land use through the city's zoning ordinance.

- Establish a COMMERCIAL-CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONE (C-CBD) for inclusion in the zoning ordinance. At present the Commercial Zone category applies to neighborhood, CBD, and highway strip development. The demands placed on commercial land and the controls needed to regulate that land vary considerably among those three levels of commercial use.

The C-CBD category should grandfather in all existing downtown land uses, but should prohibit the future use of downtown land for:

- The outdoor storage of goods or supplies.
- Warehousing and/or manufacturing except where either is incidental to permitted principal uses.
- Establishments offering repair services on items which are too large to be carried in by the customer.

The C-CBD zone should also impose lower off-street parking requirements for commercial and professional establishments, due to the availability of public parking. Stores and offices currently must provide one parking space per 300 square feet of floor area. This could be reduced to one space per 500 square feet.

- Instead of a C-CBD district, another option would be to establish an OVERLAY DOWNTOWN DISTRICT which opens up a number of possibilities for controlling the future of the area. First, it would legitimize a special assessment for purchasing and maintaining streetscape improvements such as street furniture (benches, etc.) and landscaping, increased police patrols, financing the facade program, purchasing future parking sites, financing repaving of streets and sidewalks, and other revitalization-related improvements. Second, it would legitimize certain additional regulatory powers such as zoning, design review, and demolition review.
- EXPAND THE PROFESSIONAL-MEDICAL FACILITIES ZONE (PMF) to the east on Main Street from Madison to Harrison Streets, onto Circle Boulevard, and to the south on Boulevard to the Pithlachascotee River. This approach is recommended in order to provide larger areas for offices to locate in, in the hopes of relieving the demand for downtown storefronts. The storefronts are needed to provide space for retail functions, yet many of them are currently in office use.

The section of East Main that has been recommended for rezoning to PMF is well-suited because of moderate to heavy traffic volume and a very wide right-of-way which would allow on-street parking. Circle Boulevard is currently zoned Commercial in one block and Single Family in the rest. However, two churches dominate the street. South Boulevard is a fairly heavily-travelled route which could accommodate on-street parking. All of the streets that have been recommended for PMF are currently residential, but it is felt that the PMF category is an acceptable transitional zone between commercial and residential areas, particularly along major streets such as these.

- LEASE AIR RIGHTS OVER THE CITY'S PARKING LOTS ON NORTH BANK STREET AND WEST NEBRASKA STREET, two vastly underutilized lots, in order to attract developers who would be willing to build office space. By building above the parking lots, no parking spaces would be lost. The lots also create a large void of activity -- a sizable parcel of barren asphalt that contributes little to the critical mass of activity that is needed to keep existing businesses profitable and to attract new businesses.

By increasing the amount of activity in these areas several things would be accomplished. First, the downtown population would grow, meaning greater patronage of shops, restaurants, and other businesses. Second, the underutilized lots would be put to more cost effective use. And third, the city would gain revenue from the lease payments of the building owners.

It is recommended that the city approach the Casson Engineering Firm about relocating to one of these sites. At the present time the Casson firm is located in approximately ten storefronts on the northwest corner of Main and Boulevard. These small storefronts are ideal for the types of specialty retail shops which need to be attracted to downtown. Relocation would allow Casson to consolidate their operations in one modern building, and would provide available space for the Business Recruitment Team to market to prospective businesses. Lease incentives could be offered to the Casson firm to encourage the move while keeping them in downtown.

The East Main Street parking lot is the preferred site for relocating Casson Engineering to. This is based on the firm's need to have parking for their company trucks at night. The West Nebraska lot would not be an ideal location because of the heavy use of that lot in the evening by theater and nightclub patrons.

- A number of DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES exist that would add to the atmosphere and activity in downtown.

- Two shady locations on Main Street have potential for outdoor restaurants. Those are located adjacent to the Chasco Inn and the Altman law office building. The Altman lot is heavily-wooded with a view of the river and Sims Park.

- The former Ellis Bank parking lot between Nebraska, Missouri, and Lincoln Streets is largely unused. The lot was used by the bank when it had a large back office staff. However, the bank's merger with NCNB reduced the workforce, and now the lot is usually vacant. The parcel is surrounded by large trees, and would make an excellent office or office and retail site.

- With some parcel assembly and relocations, a moderately large commercial site could be assembled in the 300 block of South Boulevard. The site would include the current sites of the Shuffleboard Club, the 24-space city parking lot on West Missouri, and the parcel containing the ABC Paint and Body Shop. The Miller's Bar property could, but need not be, included in the site assembly.

The development of a plaza on that site would restore two city-owned properties to the tax rolls, would result in upgrading of the ABC site, and would provide space for retail and office use. It would also require relocation of the Shuffleboard Club, which currently leases its facilities from the city for a nominal amount. A possible site for the shuffleboard club is the city's Recreation Center on Van Buren Street.

Traffic and Parking Improvements

Citywide traffic affects the downtown traffic situation, and vice versa, because Main Street is the only route allowing access to areas east of the Pithlachascotee River from U.S. 19 for a three mile stretch between Gulf Drive to the south and North Boulevard to the north. Consequently, much of the traffic in downtown is either coming from or going to U.S. 19 via Main Street. Any changes in downtown traffic flow would have far-reaching impacts that must be examined in their citywide framework. As such, they need to be examined in the framework of their overall impact on the city transportation network. That type of analysis is, however, beyond the scope of this report, and should be performed by a multi-disciplinary team of transportation planners and engineers as part of a citywide transportation plan. This, then, is the first and foremost transportation recommendation.

The traffic and parking recommendations in this section are based on their potentially positive effect on downtown revitalization. Aside from their effect on revitalization, it is recommended that the following downtown transportation ideas be tested for their feasibility in the framework of the citywide transportation system.

- The concept of creating a ONE-WAY STREET SYSTEM, proposed in the late-1970s in the Kimley-Horn traffic study and adopted in the 1979 City Master Plan, could be revived for public hearings to determine the consensus of opinion on this subject. The idea of implementing a one-way system is controversial, with strongly held notions having been heard on both sides of the issue. Any decision on the subject should be based on the input of merchants, professionals, and area residents.

While one-ways are often regarded as being detrimental to revitalization efforts because of the previously-mentioned effects of speeding up traffic and reducing browsing from cars, it is the conclusion of this report that in the case of New Port Richey the benefits of a one-way system would outweigh the costs. The benefits of additional on-street parking, increased development opportunities on Missouri and Nebraska, and reduced congestion at several intersections are considerable. The primary cost is the effect on residential areas of Missouri, the street recommended as the eastbound one-way route.

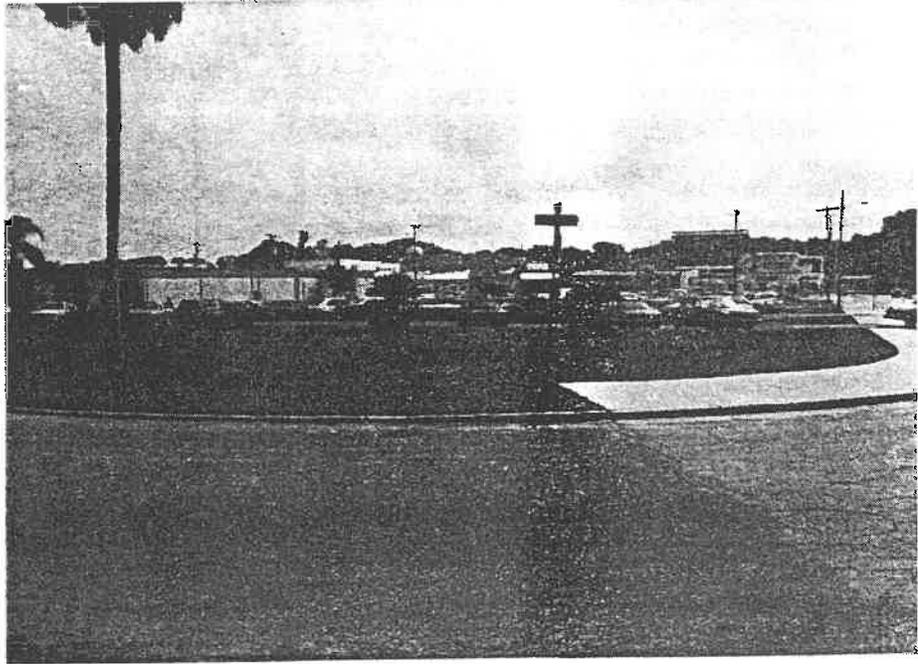
- A citywide traffic study could also be conducted so as to address the possibilities of adding another river crossing in the north half of the city. This would relieve downtown traffic congestion caused by the need to cross the river at Main Street in order to reach areas northeast of downtown. Connecting Palmetto Road, west of the river, to Massachusetts Avenue east of the river, would allow traffic from U.S. 19 to easily reach the northern half of the city and suburban areas beyond to the east.
- One of the possibilities that an additional river crossing creates is the RE-ROUTING OF TRAFFIC AROUND ORANGE LAKE, THEREBY UNITING SIMS PARK AND ORANGE LAKE INTO ONE PASSIVE RECREATION AREA. This would be accomplished by closing North Boulevard where it passes through the park (from Bank Street northwest to Circle Boulevard). As was the one-way system idea, this proposal was put forth in the 1977 Kimley-Horn traffic study and was adopted as part of the 1979 Master Plan.

Sims Park and Orange Lake are both outstanding passive recreation amenities, yet they are divided by North Boulevard, which carries approximately 7,000 cars per day. While this recommendation is not considered essential for revitalization efforts, it is put forth as a means of creating a park whose whole is greater than the sum of the parts that comprise it.

A combined Sims Park/Orange Lake, freed from vehicular intrusion, would be a safer, more attractive park than its divided predecessors. With an additional river crossing reducing the average daily traffic below its current level of 7,000 vehicles, it would be less of a disruption to re-route traffic onto Circle Boulevard.

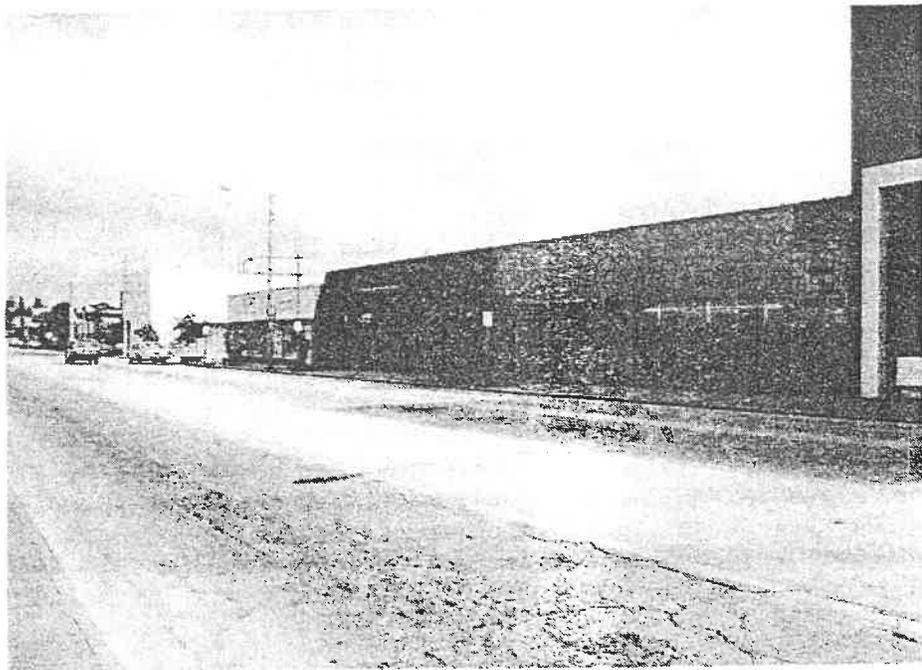
- The initial response to the perceived parking problems in downtown should be a PARKING AWARENESS CAMPAIGN. The inventory of parking spaces and the survey of municipal lot usage reveals that the parking problem is more perceptual than supply-oriented. Rather than plunge headlong into building new lots, it would be advisable to work at making the public more aware of where existing parking is located. This can be accomplished through a number of means. The aforementioned cooperative advertising, including newspaper ads and brochure, should clearly show where parking is available. The previously mentioned downtown logo should be used on signs indicating where municipal lots are. This would make the signs more attractive and noticeable, and hence more effective.
- Another element of improving parking awareness is to CLARIFY THE SIGNAGE FOR ON-STREET PARKING. There are several downtown locations where it is unclear where and when on-street parking is allowed. The problem areas were discussed in the Traffic and Parking sub-section of the Analysis of Existing Conditions section
- IF a parking awareness campaign fails to relieve perceptions of a parking problem, or if activity increases substantially, then NEW SITES FOR PUBLIC PARKING could be identified. One possible site is the McKendree Greens parcel on East Missouri. This building is currently used for overnight storage and repair of commercial-sized lawnmowers. This activity is not an essential downtown activity in that it does not attract shoppers or others who would patronize downtown businesses. The site is also centrally located in an area where parking is congested. However, this should be regarded as a last-ditch solution to the parking situation, due to the cost of acquiring the property. According to county records, the property sold for \$110,000 one year ago, and there would be demolition and site preparation costs as well.
- The proposal to lease air rights over underused municipal parking lots for development is discussed in the Zoning and Land Use recommendations.

PHOTOGRAPH 9



The heavily-used municipal parking lot on N. Bank St., a gateway to several businesses. The lot should be well-landscaped to provide shade, and to attractively complement adjacent Sims Park.

PHOTOGRAPH 10



The 100 block of W. Main. The wide street dominates the block, with no curbside parking during the day. A one-way road system would allow parking, while a facade renovation program would encourage attractive, inviting storefronts.

PHOTOGRAPH 11



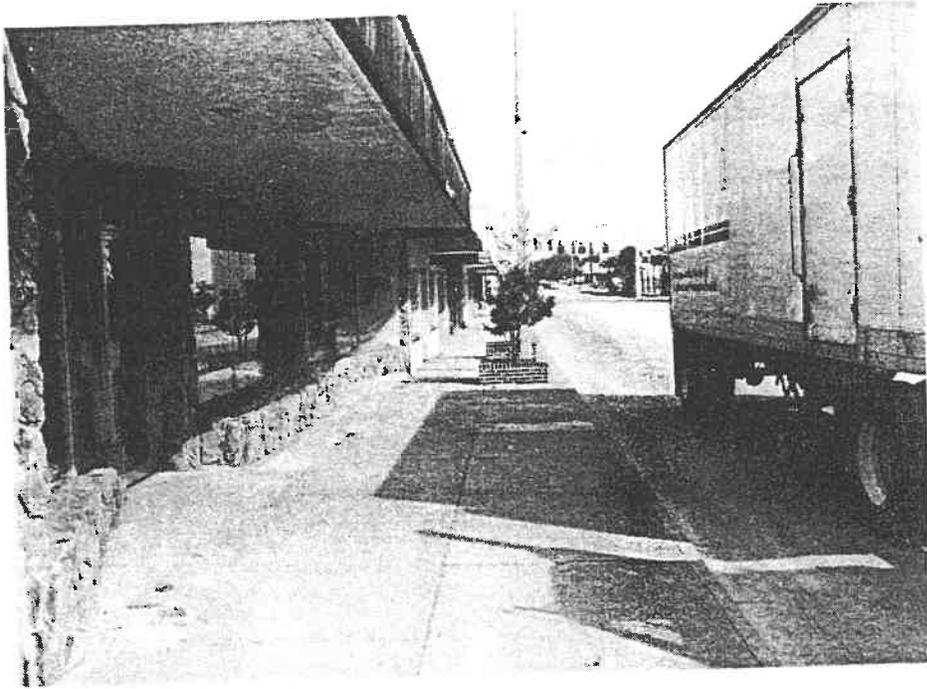
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The 100 block of N. Boulevard, with its many small storefronts, is an ideal location for an array of retailers. The existing office uses should be encouraged to relocate to another downtown site.

PHOTOGRAPH 12



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An example of how pavement and the Civic Building (left) occupy prime riverfront land in Sims Park. The roadway, parking lot, and Civic Building should be relocated to the outer edges of the park, and this area landscaped.

PHOTOGRAPH 13



The 100 block of W. Main St., looking east. A one-way road system would move large trucks further from pedestrians by allowing curbside parking. The sidewalks need replacement, using bands of brick for color.

PHOTOGRAPH 14



Re-routing traffic around Orange Lake would allow this section of N. Boulevard (looking north from Bank St.) to be converted to parkland.

Improvements to Sims Park

The most significant measure to improve the environment in Sims Park has already been discussed in the Transportation recommendations (re-routing traffic around Orange Lake rather than through the park). This will undoubtedly inspire considerable debate. The underlying goal of such an action is to preserve and improve the sylvan setting of the park. There are ample spaces elsewhere in the city to build tennis courts, ballfields, and other active recreation facilities. The single overriding merit of Sims Park, however, is the preservation of a peaceful, unspoiled natural setting within the heart of the city. The heavy vehicular traffic on North Boulevard is not the only form of intrusion on this setting, though. The following recommendations attempt to mitigate all significant intrusions and propose actions which will enhance the natural setting and integrity of the park.

- REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF PAVED LAND ALONGSIDE THE RIVER by relocating parking areas to the periphery of the park, and converting roadways to turfblock paving. Paved parking lots currently occupy much of the park's prime land, alongside the river. Diagonal parking spaces could be installed (using turfblock) along the north driveway into the park, eliminating the need for the thirteen spaces between the Civic Building and the river. This existing parking area, which is less than ten feet from the river's edge, could then be landscaped to provide a shady riverside spot. Similarly, the south parking lot, which is reached by the driveway behind the Hacienda, could be reduced by allowing parking on a diagonal along the drive, eliminating the need for the 12 space lot alongside the river.
- RELOCATE THE CIVIC BUILDING TO A SPOT ALONGSIDE THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM. This would also reduce the need for the north parking lot along the river. A small lot could be built to serve both the Civic Building and the Museum (the latter currently has no parking lot).
- The city could negotiate to obtain an option to purchase the building housing the Waller-Mills law office on the Main Street side of Sims Park. The building obscures the view into the park, and makes it difficult for passersby to see the natural setting that is available for their enjoyment. A land swap is one possible incentive, with the city providing the law firm with a parcel to relocate to in downtown.
- A SIDEWALK AND BIKE PATH uniting Sims Park with other riverfront public land to the north along the Boulevard would make both parks more accessible to residents.
- INCREASED LANDSCAPING OF THE BOAT RAMP next to the Chamber of Commerce would make that heavily used and valuable amenity more enjoyable and attractive. With more shade trees that area could be a fascinating place to picnic and watch the array of boats come and go.

- The DOWNTOWN EVENTS PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE could be given wider latitude and encouragement in scheduling activities for the park. The bandshell is a fine facility that receives far too little use.
- A BIENNIAL MONITORING OF THE CONDITION OF ORANGE LAKE could occur to guard against degradation of the water quality. The lake acts as a retention pond for stormwater, which contains heavy metals, lawn fertilizers, oil, and other pollutants. Water quality should be examined periodically to ward off any problems that may occur.

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DOWNTOWN MERCHANT SURVEY
(results in percentages)

On behalf of the City of New Port Richey, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council is conducting a survey as part of the Downtown Development Plan that is currently being prepared. As a merchant, professional, and/or building owner in the downtown, your views are particularly important in setting priorities for revitalization.

Your answers will be strictly confidential. A summary of the survey results will be made available to the public as part of the Downtown Plan.

Please complete the survey form and return it in the attached self-addressed, postage-paid envelope by Friday, September 5, 1986. Your time and ideas will be greatly appreciated.

1) Type of business: _____

2) What is the approximate square footage of your building? _____

3) What year was your building constructed? _____

4) Do you: 45 own the building
24 rent on a short term (year to year) lease
31 rent on a long term (multi-year) lease

5) How long has your business been located in the downtown area?
24 Less than 2 years
20 3 - 5 years
14 5 - 10 years
41 More than 10 years

6) Is your current location adequate for your space needs? 67 Yes
33 No
 If no, how much additional space do you need? _____

7) Do you have any plans to expand? 24 Yes
49 No
27 Not sure

8) Do you have any plans to relocate? 8 Yes
76 No
16 Not sure
 If yes, where to and why? _____

9) Approximately how many customers or clients do you serve on an average day? _____

0-10 clients	29%
11-25	36
26-50	20
51-100	4
100 or more	11

10) Please estimate the percentage of customers you draw from:
 _____ Downtown New Port Richey
 _____ The remainder of the city
 _____ Outside of the city

11) Please estimate the percentage of your customers that:
 _____ Walk to your location
 _____ Drive to your location
 _____ Other (delivery customers, etc.)

12) What are your hours: Monday - Thursday _____
 Friday _____
 Saturday _____
 Sunday _____

13) Over the last three years has your business activity:
64 Increased
2 Decreased
30 Stayed about the same
4 Not sure

14) Which of the following advertising methods do you use?
18 Radio 10 Magazines
4 Television 41 Mailings
47 Newspaper 35 Other -yellow pages 16
 14 none

15) Would you be interested in participating with other downtown merchants and professionals in combined advertising?
41 Yes
29 No
31 Not sure

16) Is parking adequate near your store or office? 71 Yes (go to question 18)
29 No (go to question 17)
0 Not sure

17) How do you think the parking situation could be improved? _____

18) How would you rate Downtown New Port Richey for the following?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Attractiveness of downtown area	(0)	(19)	(52)	(17)	(13)
Cleanliness of streets and sidewalks	(4)	(25)	(38)	(27)	(6)
Appearance of building exteriors	(0)	(10)	(46)	(27)	(17)
Appearance of signs	(0)	(21)	(38)	(23)	(19)
Availability of parking	(2)	(15)	(33)	(25)	(25)

Convenience of business hours	(2)	(42)	(51)	(4)	(0)	3.43
Variety of goods and services	(0)	(15)	(30)	(28)	(28)	2.32
Cost of goods and services	(2)	(28)	(57)	(9)	(4)	3.15
Smoothness of traffic flow	(2)	(35)	(30)	(28)	(4)	3.02

19) What three things do you like most about downtown? (please place the most important items first.) a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____

20) What three things are the greatest problems in downtown? (please place the most important issues first.) a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____

21) In general terms, what do you think should be the goal for improving downtown? _____

22) What kinds of new businesses would you like to see in Downtown New Port Richey? _____

23) What kinds of improvements do you think the city should make in downtown? _____

24) What other types of improvements should be made in downtown? _____

25) Please check whether you would you be in favor of or oppose the following programs:

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure
Storefront renovation controls	(53)	(26)	(9)	(11)	(2)
A sign ordinance	(41)	(37)	(13)	(7)	(2)

ion 18)
on 17)

Poor A

(13) 2

(6) 2

(17) 2

(19) 2

(2)

Trees and sidewalk improvements	(77)	(13)	(4)	(2)	(4)
Traffic circulation improvements	(56)	(23)	(13)	(4)	(4)
Limiting the height of new buildings	(19)	(30)	(15)	(23)	(13)
On-street parking meters	(2)	(13)	(8)	(71)	(6)
More parking lots	(46)	(31)	(10)	(4)	(8)

25) Other comments you may have (feel free to add separate sheets): _____

THAT CONCLUDES THE SURVEY. THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR IDEAS WITH US.

APPENDIX B

RESIDENT SURVEY

(results in percentages)

On behalf of the City of New Port Richey, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council is conducting a random survey of residents of New Port Richey as part of the Downtown Development Plan being prepared for the city. Your answers to the following questions will be used in determining where and how to make improvements in downtown.

Your responses will be strictly confidential. A summary of the survey results will be available as part of the Downtown Development Plan.

Please return the completed survey in the attached self-addressed, postage-paid envelope by Friday, September 5, 1986.

1) How often do you come downtown to do the following:

	3 or more times a week	1-2 times a week	3 or more times a month	once a month	less than once a month	never
Shop (for major purchases)	(10)	(10)	(2)	(2)	(19)	(57)
Eat (sit-down or take-out)	(12)	(7)	(10)	(12)	(31)	(29)
Do errands (banking, cleaners etc.)	(10)	(17)	(31)	(14)	(19)	(10)
Visit a doctor, lawyer, etc.	(0)	(5)	(2)	(27)	(32)	(34)
Work	(17)	(0)	(2)	(0)	(0)	(79)
Go to Sims Park	(7)	(5)	(10)	(24)	(40)	(14)
Meet friends or socialize	(12)	(24)	(7)	(14)	(12)	(31)
Other (describe)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)

2) How do you usually get downtown?

40 Walk

86 Drive

 Other (describe) _____

3) If stores were open more evenings, would you shop more?

31 Yes

40 No

29 Not sure

4) How would you rate downtown New Port Richey on the following?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Average
Attractiveness of the downtown area	(5)	(20)	(23)	(28)	(25)	2.
Cleanliness of streets and sidewalks	(7)	(24)	(34)	(27)	(7)	2.
Appearance of building exteriors	(8)	(23)	(23)	(33)	(15)	2.
Appearance of signs	(3)	(13)	(45)	(24)	(16)	2.
Availability of parking	(7)	(17)	(27)	(12)	(37)	2.
Convenience of business hours	(5)	(8)	(36)	(36)	(15)	2.
Variety of goods and services	(0)	(8)	(23)	(15)	(55)	1.
Cost of goods and services	(3)	(8)	(49)	(26)	(15)	2.
Smoothness of traffic flow	(5)	(27)	(34)	(17)	(17)	2.

5) When you think of downtown, what business, building, or landmark first comes to mind? _____

Why? _____

6) What three things do you like most about downtown? (please place the most important items first)

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

7) What three things are the greatest problems in downtown? (please place the most important issues first)

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

8) What do you think is downtown's greatest advantage in competing against shopping plazas and malls? _____

or

5) 2.
9) What do you think is downtown's greatest disadvantage in competing against shopping plazas and malls? _____

7) 2.
5) 2.
10) What do you think should be the goal for improving downtown?

6) 2.
7) 2.
5) 2.
11) What new types of stores or businesses would you like to see in downtown New Port Richey? (please list the most important first).

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5) 1.8
5) 2.5
12) What kinds of improvements do you think the city should make in downtown?

7) 2.8
13) What other types of improvements should be made in downtown? _____

first

most

14) Other comments you may have (feel free to add separate sheets). _____

15) Indicate your sex: 43 Male
57 Female
_____ Rather not respond

ce the

16) Indicate your age: 0 Under 18
12 18 - 35
21 36 - 50
38 51 - 65
0 Over 65
_____ Rather not respond

against

17) How long have you lived in New Port Richey?
7 Less than one year
17 1 to 5 years
11 6 to 10 years
21 More than ten years

18) How long does it take you to get to downtown by car?

<u>41</u>	Less than two minutes
<u>36</u>	2 to 5 minutes
<u>23</u>	6 to 10 minutes
<u>0</u>	More than ten minutes

19) How many people are there in your household? _____

20) What is the total annual income of your household?

<u>29</u>	Up to \$10,000
<u>23</u>	\$10,001 to \$15,000
<u>11</u>	\$15,001 to \$20,000
<u>20</u>	\$20,001 to \$30,000
<u>17</u>	More than \$30,000
<u>-</u>	Rather not respond

THAT CONCLUDES THE SURVEY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.

LIST OF MERCHANTS AND PROFESSIONALS
 IN DOWNTOWN NEW PORT RICHEY
 Arranged by street
 As of October 1, 1986

ADAMS STREET, 100 block North

- 104 Neil's Barber Shop
- 106 Richey Accounting and Tax Service
- 108 Carl N. Lawson And Associates
- 110 Mary-Ann's School of Dance

ADAMS STREET, 200 block South

- 202 Discovery Real Estate/Executive Garden Apts.

BANK STREET, 100 block North

- 105 Vacant
- 107 Munty Appliance Repair Service

BOULEVARD, 100 block North

- 106 Casson Engineering
- 107 Nordic Plumbing
- 108 Boulevard Shoe Repair
- 109 Standard Builders
- 110 Casson Engineering
- 112 Vacant
- 114 Vacant
- 115 Ross G. Olson, M.D.
- 116 Vacant
- 118 Vacant
- 120 Casson Engineering
- 122 Richard C. Williams, Esquire

BOULEVARD, 200 block North

- 204 Pasco Office Supplies

BOULEVARD, 100 block South

- 101 Wag-On Inn

BOULEVARD, 200 block South

200 El Gato Mexican Restaurant
202 Mallett Hardware
202 1/2 Sportmen's Attic
203 Richey Suncoast Theatre
204 1/2 Design Graphics Advertising Associates
205 M. L. Rogers and Cummings Insurance
206 Aro Lock and Key
206A The Hat Place
208 Vacant
209 Youth and Family Alternatives Focus and Impact Program
210 Pizza Joe's
211 Sebastian's Cafe
212 Jimmy's Boulevard Restaurant

BOULEVARD, 300 block South

304 Kirsch Interiors
304B Hair Fantasy
306 Capital Appliance Service
307 Miller's Bar
309 ABC Paint and Body Shop
310 Billy's Auto Body and Paint
318 C & M Petroleum
325 NPR Shuffleboard Club

BOULEVARD, 400 block South

402 SA' Sporting Goods
404 Master Mechanics
407 Glasrock Home Health Care
410 Guaranteed Electrolysis Clinic
412 Gulfstream Cablevision

MAIN STREET, 100 block East

1 Rock and Spence, Esquires
102 Cathedral Automotive
105 Tri-Arts Studio
113 Vacant
114 Weiskopf Travel
New-To-You Consignment Shop
Affirmative Power Book Club
117 Do Right Fitness Center
120 Vacant
122 Bob Boyd TV Repair
123 Tampa Christian Supply
124 House of Hobbies
128 Charles S. Partin, AIA
130 Pasco Citizens Council on Aging
143 NPR Cleaners
147 Shell Realty

MAIN STREET, 200 block East

- 202 Grandma Sally's Restaurant
- 208 Donald I Cadle, Jr., D.D.S.
Randall A. Diez, D.M.D.
- 215 Ted W. Brown, D.D.S.
- 216 Robert L. Hartzell and David E. Parrish, Optometrists
- 217 Country Wood
- 217 Florida Litho
- 218 Craig C. Vallanti, Esquire
Bertha P. Sanchez, Esquire
- 221 Shear Delight Dog Grooming
- 221 Richard E. Adams, D.D.S.
- 225 Home Owners Warranty Council
Pasco Builders Association
- 230 Frederick A. Grassin, D.O.

MAIN STREET, 300 block East

- 301 Circle K
- 302 NPR Library
- 309 Clendon Webb/State Farm Insurance
Rickard, Schultz, and McLean, P.A.
Robert H. Lecznar, Esquire
Marsha B. Glisson, Esquire
- 317 James Campbell, P.A.
Claudia J. Wheeler, Esquire
- 320 NPR City Hall
- 327 Magic Mirror Hair Salon

MAIN STREET, 100 block West

- 101 Casson Engineering
- 103 Casson Engineering
- 105 Casson Engineering
- 109 Roscoe's Rexall Drugs
- 111 Charles P. Casson, General Contractor
Lebo Retail Consultants
Ross Builders and Developers
- 112 Ray Opticians
- 113 Tropical Realty and Investments
- 115 Ceramic Hobby Hut
- 116 Enzo's Cafe
- 117 Conrad E. Hubbard, CPA
- 119 H. Curtis Skipper, Esquire
- 122 Allgood and Misemer
- 123 A to Z Art and Drafting Supplies
- 125 Vacant
- 127 Terry's Beauty Salon
- 128 NCNB Bank
Pasco County Economic Development Council
Suncoast Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- 131 R. Gayle Wyatt Insurance

MAIN STREET, 200 block West

200 James J. Altman, Esquire
201 Hacienda Home for Special Services

MAIN STREET, 300 block West

300 North Guardian Funeral Home
301 Waller and Mills

MAIN STREET, 400 block West

407 West Pasco Chamber of Commerce
418 Frank Parker, CPA
420 Tonnie's Florist

MAIN STREET, 500 block West

501 N. John Stewart, Esquire
502 Jensen and Jensen Insurance
504 The Flower Shoppe
505 Bill Barnett Realty
506 Edward C. Scheu, D.C.
508 Pasco Himitsu Dojo, Inc.
509 Copitech Corporation
510 Jade Fountain Restaurant
511 Jim Barnett TV
512 Fred Astaire Dance Studio
513 Executive Title Services
515 Fan World
517 Houston Photography
519 Vacant
521 Pasco Travel Service
522 Guiliani Office Supplies
525 Dee's Jeweler's Bench
527 Wigs by Shirl
529 Marilyn's Beauty Salon
531 Baseball World of Florida

MAIN STREET, 600 block West

607 Vacant
610 Adamek Builders Supply
Architectural Rendering and Drafting Service
Poplick Polygraph Service
613 Starkey Insurance
614 Faupel Funeral Home
617 Town and Country Hair Styling
619 Vacant
621 Pasco Blueprint and Supply
625 Jilly's Lounge
626 Marion's Beauty Salon
628 American Party Supplies and Rentals

MAIN STREET, 700 block West

- 702 Lopers Luncheonette
- 705 First Savings Bank of Florida
- 706 Coastal Bonded Title
- 708 Selective Real Estate
- 718 Cox Chiropractic Center
- 720 (Karate studio and travel agency reportedly to begin operations in near future)
- 717 Vacant

MISSOURI, 100 block East

- 103 Peter J. Altman, CPA
- Mallett Construction
- Mallett and Associates
- Austin Drafting Services
- Counseling Associates
- T.K. Productions
- 105 Arcade Jewelers
- 107 Johnson-Frey Design Group
- 114 McKendree Greens Lawn Care
- 115 West Pasco Press/Green Sheet
- 124 General Telephone
- 129 Banester Fire and Safety Equipment

MISSOURI, 100 block West

- 142 American Red Cross

RIVER ROAD, 100 block North

- 101 Vacant
- 108 Credit Bureau of NPR and West Pasco
- 114 Master Title Service
- Paul A. Kaleel, Esquire
- 117 Rivers Edge Pediatrics

TAMPA BAY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

Westwood Fletcher, Jr.
William D. Vannatta
Robert G. Prior

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Secretary/Treasurer

Julia E. Greene
Manuel Pumariega
Sheila Benz
Ellen Covert Cohen
Timothy S. Pfohl

Executive Director
Assistant Director
Director of Planning
Program Manager
Associate Planner*

November 18, 1986

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
9455 Koger Boulevard • St Petersburg FL 33702
(813)577 5151/Tampa 224 9380

*Indicates direct report responsibility.