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URBAN RENEWAL IN SYRACUSE--
THE NEAR EAST SIDE

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FOREWORD

Syracuse has not escaped the problem of slums. Like any other city it has blighted, decayed areas which are encroaching upon sound neighborhoods. Many times this problem has gone unchecked mainly because no one has known how to handle it. This is not to say that people have not tried. Slums certainly are not something new--ever since cities began there have been poorer, more deteriorating sections compared with other areas of the city. From the start of cities until today attempts have been made to arrest the spread of this blight. Many times these attempts have failed because the problem is such a large one and is therefore difficult to comprehend and treat effectively. This has been and still is the situation today. However, the beginning of a large organization--namely the Federal Government--in attempting to tackle a large problem--slums--was started with the passage of Title I of the Housing Act of 1949.

The purpose of this study is to examine Urban Renewal in Syracuse. More specifically it will deal with the planning process with respect to the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project. Apart from the fact that Syracuse is the city in which I now reside and is therefore familiar to me, it was also chosen as an area of study because it is considered to be an

average, typical American city. Fortune magazine, May 1943, did an article on city planning in Syracuse. In this article it is stated (on p. 121) that Syracuse was chosen as a city to study because its "problems were characteristic of American cities in general so that the experience (of Syracuse's planning methods) might have the widest possible application." The Near East Side Project was chosen since it was the first major urban renewal project undertaken in Syracuse and the planning is by now pretty much completed. Because of this, actual end results of the Project can be seen, evaluated, and compared with the proposed objectives, goals, and promises. In addition to the study of the planning process of the Near East Side Project a little of the history of the planning processes in Syracuse prior to the start of Urban Renewal in Syracuse will be investigated. Sources of information will be basically planning studies done for the Near East Side and interviews with people who were connected with the Project.

Thus far urban renewal constitutes the major way by which inner cities are being maintained and changed. There have been very few actual case studies done examining and evaluating the actual results of the process of urban renewal. So far the majority of writings on urban renewal have dealt with the generalized processes and effects, not with the actual physical development of a project in a particular

city. This thesis is to be a modest attempt to undertake such a study, the Near East Side Project in Syracuse, New York.

It is also needed as soon as possible in order to record the actual occurrences attendant to the planning process before the live experiences are forgotten or lost. It has been over fifteen years since the start of the Near East Side Project. Obviously much has occurred in this time span. People moved out of the area, it was totally cleared, streets were changed, sites were improved and finally re-developed. Different people now live in the area. It would probably be safe to say that the majority of these people are unaware of the planning that was done before today's physical results appeared. This study then is to be a piece of information offering to the reader an idea of some of the inputs that went into the original planning of the Near East Side and of the inconsistencies and compromises that followed. Special attention will be given of course to the development of those sites that were the major components of the Near East Side.

It is this writer's hope and aim that this work might encourage further investigation that would do justice to the complexity and import of a subject such as this.

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CHAPTER I

THE SLUMS

The need for attention towards problems of our cities is obvious. Many similar signs of decay can be found in any city not only in the United States, but in almost any city in the world. This problem is quickly becoming universal. Because of the vastness that the problem of deterioration of cities entails, there have been hundreds of authors writing hundreds of volumes on all aspects of the problem. Perhaps given greater emphasis is the problem of the "slum." The word slum definitely does not have a clear-cut definition. It brings to mind many things such as overcrowding, disease, poor people and social outcasts, but most commonly agreed upon is that it brings to mind the simple word, problem. According to Scott Greer, "Poverty, crime, disease, broken families, and the like were linked together in certain geographical areas of the city where housing was deteriorated and rents low; these neighborhoods were given the summary name, 'the slums.'"¹

It appears difficult to disentangle physical conditions, social conditions, and the inhabitants of slums when

¹Scott Greer, Urban Renewal and American Cities (Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), p. 14.

attempting to define the condition to which the word slum refers. Jane Jacobs states that, "Slums and their populations are the victims (and the perpetrators) of seemingly endless troubles that reinforce each other. Slums operate as vicious circles."²

It seems just as difficult to label the population of a slum into a distinct classification. As one of its most distinct and important components it merits a little consideration and probably no other description is as detailed as John R. Seeley's. Starting with a set of differences-- "the difference between necessity and opportunity, and the difference between permanence and change,"³ he finds that there are four major types of slum dwellers; the "permanent necessitarians," the "temporary necessitarians," the "permanent opportunists," and the "temporary opportunists."⁴ Within these four types are a great many subtypes.

The "permanent necessitarians" are further divided into three sub-types; the "indolent," the "adjusted poor," and the "social outcasts." "All three are those who feel they 'cannot' leave the area, and who will or can do nothing

²Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York: Random House, Inc., 1961), pp. 270-81, quoted in Jewel Bellush and Murray Hausknecht, ed., Urban Renewal: People, Politics, and Planning (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc.), p. 137.

³John R. Seeley, "The Slum: Its Nature, Use, and Users," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXV, No. 1 (February, 1959), pp. 7-14, quoted in Bellush and Hausknecht, Urban Renewal, p. 111.

⁴Ibid.

to find alternative housing."⁵ The "indolent" are characterized by "general apathy" or "immobility" and do not have "get up and go." The "adjusted poor" represents those living in the slum because of necessity. Even though they could leave if they really wanted they choose not to do so because they have adapted their habits so now they accept the living conditions of the slum. The "social outcasts," a group composed of drug addicts, prostitutes and pimps, "winoes," etc., choose to live in the slum because it is a "more receptive or less rejecting habitat" than other neighborhoods.

The "temporary necessitarians" represents the "respectable poor," those whose residence in the slum is often temporary, although most of their lives is spent living in the slum. This group is made up of people who are financially forced to live in the slum, but are not ready to accept it. Also in this category are the "trapped," those who purchased buildings in the area when it was more respectable. When they now find themselves in a slum many choose to leave.

In the category of the "permanent opportunists" are found the "fugitives," those who choose the slum because they have had encounters with the law and now need the anonymity which the slum can offer. Then there are the "undefinables" whose "individualism of outlook and whose detachment from urban ways led them to seek no clear social

⁵Ibid., p. 112.

identity (or to operate under many)."⁶ The third sub-type of the "permanent opportunists" are the "models," religious or social missionaries who feel they can "furnish an example" to others. The last group in this third category is the "sporting crowd." These are people who choose the slum because the slum rents leave them with more money for other things such as bookmaking which is most likely found in the slum.

The last category is the "temporary opportunists," which is composed of the "beginners," the "climbers," and the "entrepreneurs." The "beginners" are mostly the immigrants who locate in the slum when they first arrive because they have no other place to go. The "climbers" is made up of those who have been in the city for a while and choose the slum to live most likely because it will allow them (due to low rents, etc.) to establish financial resources and eventually to move into a better neighborhood. Lastly are the "entrepreneurs." These are people who use the slum also to accumulate financial resources in order for them to move out. However, they accumulate resources by taking advantage of the slum. For example, they eventually buy a house, subdivide it into small apartments, and collect

⁶Ibid., p. 115.

rent money from it which eventually amounts to enough to purchase more slum property and ultimately property in a better neighborhood.⁷

It can be seen that the slum population is very complex. Because of the large proportion of "undesirables" that tend to concentrate in slum neighborhoods, the slum has tended to be viewed with fright and caution.

Slums were seen as threats to the larger society. As the centers of concentration for criminals and diseased persons, they were "contagious," for their effects were apt to spill over into the city as a whole. Then too, as aggregations of the most unfortunate, speaking foreign languages and living in different worlds, they were suspected as aliens, seditionists, and possibly anarchists.⁸

According to Greer, the physical conditions of slums was thought to be like a cancer. "Buildings infected buildings and the latter, in turn, infected people."⁹

Thus, it was thought that housing was the major factor in the elimination of slums. It was with this idea that the New Deal created the Housing Act of 1937. Under this program slums were cleared and public housing was put up in its place. This housing was built on the sites where the slums had been because no one wanted public housing

⁷Ibid., all categories taken from pp. 112-118.

⁸Greer, Urban Renewal and American Cities, p. 14.

⁹Ibid., p. 15.

with its former slum residents near them. As housing became more plentiful, "public housing became increasingly a service for the bottom dogs--broken families, the aged poor, the ill, and especially, residentially restricted Negroes."¹⁰ The same problem seemed to appear again. Because of this and also because public housing at the rate it was going could never rebuild all the deteriorated neighborhoods resulting from the Depression and World War II, a new bill was introduced, accepted, and finally enacted--this was to be known as the Housing Act of 1949.

Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 is entitled, "Slum Clearance and Community Development and Redevelopment." It was an attempt by the Federal Government to deal with slum areas of cities. The three main purposes of this title of the 1949 act were, according to the Douglas report:

(a) to speed up the clearance of slums and badly blighted residential areas; (b) to facilitate the provision of decent, low-income housing by helping to finance the acquisition and preparation of appropriate sites, including insite preparation of public facilities that would contribute to "a suitable living environment," and (c) to give private enterprise "maximum opportunity" to take part in redeveloping these areas.¹¹

The creation of this Federal program was a major step towards the formal recognition of the problem of

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Building the American City (Douglas Report), House Document No. 91-34, p. 152.

decaying areas of our cities. Housing, of course, was one of the major points of emphasis of the program. As stated by Congress, sec. 110c of title I of the 1949 Act, an urban renewal project may include besides acquisition of a slum or deteriorating area, "open land necessary for predominantly residential uses."¹² Amended in 1959 this section further states "Financial assistance shall not be extended under this title with respect to any urban renewal area which is not predominantly residential in character and which, under the urban renewal plan therefore, is not to be redeveloped for predominantly residential uses."¹³ There are provisions allowed for an area to be used which is not predominantly residential in character. In such cases the governing body of the local public agency must determine that the area is needed for redevelopment in order to assure proper development of the community as a whole. Over the years increasing grant funds have been allowed to be used for areas non-residential in character. From the original 10 per cent, the amount was raised several times until it reached 35 per cent in 1965.

¹² Committee on Banking and Currency, House of Representatives, 42d Congress 1st Session, Basic Laws and Authorities on Housing and Urban Development, Sec. 110c.

¹³ Ibid.

From the start of the program in 1949 until present there has been an obvious shift in emphasis of the program. It no longer seems to provide exclusively for the eradication of decaying housing areas. As Douglas states, "The program did not have to be defended now as something for the poor."¹⁴ The Housing Act of 1964 dealt more with rehabilitation than previous acts; the Act of 1965 with community facilities; the Demonstration Cities Program of 1966 (Model Cities) with improving the quality of the neighborhood; the Act of 1968 with low and moderate income and also rehabilitation; and the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 with new communities. This shift in emphasis allowed for redevelopment and restoration of central business districts. This led to a great deal of support of the program from merchants who had vast investments of private capital and found themselves trapped in an encroaching decaying area.

The Federal Urban Renewal Program seems to work fine on paper. In reality the results have not always been the best. There have been many critics of the program commenting on its faults and its failure, stating the number of housing units destroyed outweigh the number of units built in their place (Martin Anderson, 1964), criticizing relocation practices (Chester Hartman, 1964), and pointing

¹⁴Douglas Report, p. 158.

out that urban renewal in destroying neighborhoods has done more harm than good to the urban poor (Herbert J. Gans, 1965).¹⁵ Even the Federal Government admits to some of the shortcomings of the program:

Despite the billions poured into it, this program has not been effective in improving urban living conditions. For one thing, it has dealt only with the manifestations of social problems, not with their basic causes. The forces that lead to decline and abandonment of large neighborhoods are not primarily physical forces; they are basically human, social, and governmental forces.¹⁶

"The competition for renewal funds has put a premium on developing projects that reflect the priorities of the Federal official reviewing the application rather than the priorities of the community itself,"¹⁷ and further:

A participating locality has had to observe over 1800 pages of Federal regulations in carrying out its project. Much of the time and talent of local officials, therefore, has been directed to staying within--or getting around--this maze of regulations rather than toward solving basic community problems.¹⁸

Of course, there has been success with the program as well as failure. However, it is difficult to examine

¹⁵ The literature on Urban Renewal is prolific, but not conclusive. For a good general collection of essays, analyses, and critiques, see James Q. Wilson, Ed., Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1966).

¹⁶ Government Statement, "Urban Renewal."

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

the success or failure when the program as a whole is being discussed for it is much too vast. In order to grasp all the elements that go into an urban renewal project, it is helpful to examine a specific project in the context of its locality. For these reasons the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project of Syracuse will be examined. This project is to be used for it was the first major one in Syracuse. Because of this, many of the end results of the project can be seen today and their development can be traced from conception to completion.

The historical conditions that accompanied the start of the urban renewal program in Syracuse will be examined in order to put the program in its proper perspective with respect to the city as a whole. As stated earlier the increasing number of areas that could be readily classified as slum or blighted was a major reason for the creation of the Federal urban renewal program. Similarly on a smaller scale was the situation in Syracuse that led to the start of the program in the city. The most obvious critical factors of course had to do with housing. Most of the areas that were termed slums were predominantly residential.

The passage of the Federal Housing Act of 1949 gave Syracuse the opportunity to cope with the problems of its slums. At this time the planning commission for the city assumed the responsibility of slum clearance. Originally

in Section 272 of the charter of the city of Syracuse the duties and powers of the commission were as follow:

It shall be the duty of the commission to prepare and maintain a comprehensive plan of the city and the whole or part of lands outside of and within a distance three miles beyond the city limits, and set forth thereon such streets, parks, playgrounds, and other public areas as it deems the proper development of the city requires or may hereafter require to be acquired, developed, opened, extended, widened, or discontinued.

The Federal government because it was to give funds, had some control over what cities were to do in the way of planning. Edward Banfield and James Q. Wilson, citing T. J. Kent state:

After the war, master planning received powerful impetus and support from the federal government. Under the Housing and Redevelopment Act of 1949 the government encouraged the cities to undertake vast new projects that would require planning, and it agreed to pay much of the cost of this planning. Housing and redevelopment suddenly became as important as zoning in the budgets of many planning agencies...

continuing:

...But it was also true that a city which wanted to share in the federal largesse--and which city did not?--had to be able to show that it had made, or was in the process of making, a master plan.²⁰

¹⁹T. J. Kent as quoted in Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and the M.I.T. Press, 1963), p. 192.

²⁰Ibid.

Accordingly Syracuse established a master plan. In the general city law is a paragraph found in the city planning section (Chapter 21 of the Consolidated Laws--paragraph 28-a) which authorizes a planning board from the planning commission to prepare a master plan:

Master Plan. The planning board may prepare and change a comprehensive master plan for the development of the entire area of the city, which master plan shall show existing and proposed streets, bridges and tunnels and the approaches thereto...and such other features existing and proposed as will provide for the improvement of the city and its future growth, protection and development, and will afford adequate facilities for the public housing, transportation, distribution, comfort, convenience, public health, safety and general welfare of its population.

With the duties of the planning commission and the requirements of a comprehensive master plan set forth in charters and laws of the city, Syracuse was ready to take on an urban renewal program. With the responsibility of the creation of slum clearance programs resting with the planning commission, a statement was issued by the commission, entitled "Program of Low Rental Housing, Clearance for New Housing, Parking, Playgrounds and Business." According to a 1957 report prepared by the American Society of Planning Officials dealing with planning in the city of Syracuse, "The document attempted to relate the slum

clearance program to the low rent housing program."²¹
 One phase of housing to be undertaken by the commission as a means of helping to house families was the purchasing "of up to 50 existing obsolete houses, in reasonably good condition, in the areas next to proposed housing projects, or in the declining and outmoded residential districts nearby."²² Also included in this first policy statement were:

recommended clearance programs for business and commercial use, parking facilities and residential construction. It included one sentence on financing, consisting of a crude estimate of the local financial share of the program. No references were included as to the role of affected city departments or agencies, except a passing reference to the housing survey being undertaken by the city.²³

The American Society of Planning Officials' report further states that the planning commission failed to "adequately fill the renewal breach."²⁴ This, in turn, led to the formation of another committee, the redevelopment study committee. The purpose for the creation of this

²¹ American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO), City of Syracuse, Planning and Housing, Urban Renewal Administrative Study, p. 17.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

committee appointed by the mayor was to establish Syracuse's position with respect to renewal.

In the committee's report of 1955 to the mayor it stated:

After about two years of preliminary informal redevelopment studies by the Planning Commission staff, it was determined in January of 1954 that the growing slum condition in certain sections of the community necessitated formal municipal action. At about that time, the atmosphere of public indignation at the growth and extent of slums was beginning to be apparent.

The establishment of this committee proved to be the first major step of the city to formally recognize the slum problem in Syracuse. The mayor stated in creating this committee that he wanted it to direct the efforts of the city towards the elimination of "substandard areas" and to provide redevelopment plans that would result in "general community welfare, both socially and economically."²⁵ It was with this committee that the city started to direct its efforts towards the original objectives set forth when the planning board was authorized to prepare a comprehensive master plan--"...and will afford adequate facilities for the public housing...safety and general welfare of its population."

²⁵Ibid.

The "public indignation" referred to in the redevelopment study committee's report to the mayor stemmed from the outbreak of fires in which several children were killed. These fires presumably caused by substandard, unsafe conditions were in the area of the Near East Side--an area that was termed a slum and ultimately became the first major urban renewal project. To cope with this situation and appease the public, an inspection task force was created in 1955. With the help of inspectors from various city departments a vigorous sanitation inspection and enforcement program was conducted in an 87 block area containing 4,590 housing units. The results reinforced the suspicions that many people had about areas being unsafe and a fire hazard. Of the 4,590 units, approximately 33 per cent were found to be substandard and 20 per cent to be in dangerous condition. For many people this compilation of information was useful. However, the benefits of the study have been questioned by some. The American Society of Planning Officials in their study of planning, housing, and urban renewal in Syracuse feel that the long-range benefits of this study are difficult to assess. They feel that one of its importances, however, is "that it underscored weaknesses in the city's capacity to wage war on slums and prevent their creation."²⁶

²⁶Ibid.

As a result of this sanitation inspection and enforcement program, in 1955 a trial block was selected in order to try various means of bringing buildings up to code standards. The residents of the block were organized and the city was called upon to bring more responsive assistance to the residents with respect to municipal services. The main objective was to try to get the owners of the buildings in the area to voluntarily comply with minimum code provisions. Some houses were fixed up, but the trial program did not prove to be a complete success. The committee said that even though as a result of the program there seemed to be new respect for minimum housing standards, difficulties arose because the municipality failed to enforce health, safety, or structural laws. "The committee was aware from the beginning that such laborious physical action was only a partial answer to the whole complex problem. It was known that no single weapon could win against the slums or their growth..."²⁷ The committee did produce recommendations, however. They suggested that a more thorough investigation of codes and administration be conducted in order to lead to better code enforcement. They also stated that the financial aspect of urban renewal is a

²⁷ Redevelopment Study Committee of Syracuse quoted in ASPO Report, p. 17.

difficult part of the renewal process and implied that it should therefore be dealt with more thoroughly in the future. Perhaps the most important recommendation to come from this committee is:

...the establishment of an agency such as an "Urban Renewal Agency" to administer and coordinate the full scale urban renewal program as an official body for action. Provision for marshalling all the community forces should be made to make the attainment of common objectives possible.

In 1956 this recommendation was finally realized with the establishment of the office of director of urban renewal. (See Appendix A.)

CHAPTER II
THE WORKABLE PROGRAM

The 1954 Housing Act introduced the regulatory mechanism of the Workable Program. This program emphasized the importance of municipal codes, ordinances, and laws and their enforcement. The overall attempt of this program was to involve the local municipality more than it had previously been which would lead to the elimination of blight.

Even in Title I of the 1949 Housing Act as amended, the importance of codes is stressed. In Part A, entitled "Urban Renewal Projects, Demolition Programs, and Code Enforcement Programs, Section 101, it states:

Sec. 101. (a) In entering into any contract for advances for surveys, plans, and other preliminary work for projects under this title... the Secretary shall give consideration to the extent to which appropriate local public bodies have undertaken positive programs (through the adoption, modernization, administration, and enforcement of housing, zoning, building and other local laws, codes and regulations relating to land use and adequate standards of health, sanitation, and safety for buildings, including the use and occupancy of dwellings) for (1) preventing the spread or recurrence in the community of slums and blighted areas,...

Section 101 (c) of the 1949 Act states:

(c) No contract shall be entered into for any loan or capital grant under this title, and

no mortgage shall be insured, and no commitment to insure a mortgage shall be issued, under section 220 of the National Housing Act, as amended, unless (1) there is presented to the Secretary by the locality a workable program for community improvement (which shall include an official plan of action, as it exists from time to time, for effectively dealing with the problem of urban slums and blight within the community and for the establishment and preservation of a well-planned community with well-organized residential neighborhoods of decent homes and suitable living environment for adequate family life) for utilizing appropriate private and public resources to eliminate, and prevent the development or spread of, slums and urban blight, to encourage needed urban rehabilitation, to provide for the redevelopment of blighted, deteriorated, or slum areas, or to undertake such of the aforesaid activities or other feasible community activities as may be suitably employed to achieve the objectives of such a program,...

Basically, then, the Workable Program is a community-wide plan of action set up by a municipality outlining its fight against a slum or blighted area. It can be seen, however, that its requirement is very important because Federal subsidy depends upon the acceptance of the program.

There are seven basic elements of the Workable Program. These are:

- (1) codes and ordinances
- (2) comprehensive community plan
- (3) neighborhood analysis
- (4) administrative organization
- (5) financing

(6) housing for displaced families

(7) citizen participation.

The first Workable Program to be submitted by Syracuse was in June, 1958. The following plan of action was set forth in this first program submittal:²⁸

(1) Codes and Ordinances--The importance of the use of codes and ordinances is stated in this 1958 submittal. Codes and ordinances had been the first thing to be employed in an attempt to seriously combat blight. This was in 1954 with the code enforcement program. However, it was felt that at this time "the use of another tool--clearance and redevelopment--has emerged as the most feasible long-range solution for the area containing the greatest number of 'high hazards'--the Near East Side Area." Even though clearance was to be used almost exclusively in treatment of the Near East Side, it did not mean that code enforcement practices would be discarded. A strong code enforcement program in the areas surrounding the cleared site was considered necessary because "clearance of a blighted area always brings with it the threat of the spread of this same blight to adjacent areas..." There were two steps required in stopping the blight from spreading to adjacent areas. The first was the provision of adequate housing for the

²⁸City of Syracuse, The Workable Program, June 1958.

displaced families, and the second was the initiation of a strong code enforcement program which would prevent the spread of overcrowding and property depreciation into the adjacent areas. The role of code enforcement was now seen not as a "cure," but as a way of "preventing" or "checking" blight.

The zoning ordinances because they had been criticized (particularly in the American Society of Planning Officials' report by Blucher) were to be brought up to date by being based upon an up-to-date comprehensive plan. Also discussed in this section on codes and ordinances were the Building Code, Multiple Residence Law, Sanitary Code, Plumbing Code, Electrical Code, and Smoke Ordinance. All were stated to be either adequate or were being revised to make them adequate so as to eliminate and prevent blight. A Fire Prevention Code was formed because previously Syracuse did not have one. Also included in this section is a discussion of a Housing Code. It was felt that even though Syracuse did not have one, (the other various codes previously mentioned were felt to be so effective as to eliminate the need of a separate housing code) the possibility of the formation of a Housing Code would be considered.

(2) Comprehensive Community Plan--Included in this section is a short history of planning in Syracuse as well as an organizational breakdown of the staff of the Planning

Commission at that time. What is more important in terms of overall policy is a section entitled "Elements of the Comprehensive General Plan." Included in this section was (1) Land Use Plan, (2) Thorofare Plan, (3) Community Facilities Plan, and (4) Public Improvements Program.

Stated in (1) Land Use Plan is the fact that Syracuse at the time did not have "a current land use plan to guide its zoning activities or physical development program." The immediate task of the Commission then was to prepare a new land use plan. This was to engage basic research necessary to determine the demands for land by residence and public occupancy, industry, and business for 1965 and 1970.

(2) Thorofare Plan--This listed the basic components that made up the thorofare plan--New York State Thruway, East-West Expressway (Route 690), North-South Expressway (Route 81), Inner Arterial Loop (which would directly affect the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project), Radial Arterials, and Outer Circumferential Loop.

(3) The Community Facilities Plan states that planning for community facilities had not been closely integrated with the Planning Commission. However, this was to change with the planning of parks, schools, water supply and sewers, and other community facilities tied in with the Commission's land use plans.

(4) Public Improvements Program gave a brief resume of how the capital improvement program works and its present situation financially.

Lastly in the Comprehensive Community Plan section is a short discussion of development controls--zoning and subdivision regulations. Because zoning had been in effect in Syracuse since 1922, it had been amended almost continuously over the years. The Planning Commission felt that it was necessary to undertake a complete revision of the zoning ordinance and proposed to do so.

(3) Neighborhood Analysis and Existing Neighborhood Studies--Due to the fact that existing studies (at that time) of residential neighborhoods were not current nor did they encompass the entire city, this section of the Workable Program proposed the undertaking of a new program of neighborhood delineation and analysis. Each neighborhood in the future studies was to be carefully examined in terms of its land use, housing conditions, and community facilities.

(4) Administrative Organization--This section of the first Workable Program for the city of Syracuse contained much information concerning codes and their enforcement. Prior to 1954 "there had never been a sustained program of code enforcement" in the city. With a new Mayor, Donald H. Mead, promising an attack on this problem, a

newspaper series highlighting substandard living conditions,²⁹ and a series of serious slum fires, an emergency code enforcement program (as mentioned previously) was initiated. This led to a permanent long-range program. Also in this section is a brief explanation of the enforcement procedure of the building code (and explanations of other codes) and the results of inspection and enforcement throughout the city.

Another major area touched upon in this section is entitled "Present Method for Administering and Coordinating Other Urban Renewal Activities, such as Clearance, Rehabilitation, Relocation, Public Works, etc." Delineated in this section are the duties and responsibilities of The Office of Urban Renewal--to supervise slum clearance and rehabilitation and coordinate efforts of all agencies and city departments that are involved with slum clearance and urban renewal; The City Planning Commission--to prepare a comprehensive plan of the city, take care of neighborhood analyses, and be in charge of zoning ordinances; and the Syracuse Housing Authority--whose powers include the incurring of debts and condemnation. Some examples of close coordination with city agencies are also given as well as plans

²⁹Post Standard, February 14, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, April 21, May 20, 26, 1954.

for improving the administration and coordination of the enforcement of regulations and other urban renewal activities. Among the plans were the idea of extending the Office of Urban Renewal into a Department of Urban Renewal. (This was subsequently done.)

(5) Financing--Here is given financial ability of the city of Syracuse to carry out the Workable Program. Also given is "the method by which Syracuse plans to finance the additional services required to carry on urban renewal"--salaries, costs of studies on blight, planning costs, etc.

(6) Housing for Displaced Families--In this section are the plans for relocation of families and businesses, including a listing of the housing resources.

(7) Citizen Participation--Included in this last section of the Workable Program are the existing citizen organizations (at that time they were professional groups, groups affiliated with the Council of Social Agencies, church-centered groups, and citizen-interest groups) and the power that each had with respect to the process of urban renewal.

According to Norman Johnsen in his thesis The Impact of Urban Renewal upon Traditional Code Enforcement Practices in Syracuse, New York, the elements of the Workable Program which are especially significant in Syracuse are

those of codes and ordinances, administrative organization, and citizen participation.³⁰ "They may be classified as being a key to any future success for the code agencies and the Office of Urban Renewal."³¹ "Faulty or underdeveloped interdepartmental coordination" states Johnsen, is one of the most serious weak spots in the City's code enforcement program.³²

CONCLUSION

If as Johnsen states the success of the Office of Urban Renewal is based largely upon codes and ordinances, then the Office (and certain renewal projects) has not completely succeeded. As stated in Syracuse's 1958 submittal of the Workable Program all codes and ordinances were adequate or were being revised in order to be adequate to eliminate and prevent blight. Something somewhere has gone wrong. More than fifteen years have passed since this statement in the Workable Program was made. Today blighted areas still exist. Perhaps Urban Renewal has eliminated some blighted areas (clearing the Near East

³⁰ Norman Conrad Johnsen, "Impact of Urban Renewal Upon Traditional Code Enforcement Practices in Syracuse, N.Y.," (Thesis, Syracuse University, 1962).

³¹ Ibid., p. 106.

³² Ibid.

Side, for example), but it has not prevented its spread. Faulty interdepartmental coordination as Johnsen stated in his thesis seems to be a major cause for this situation. In the Near East Side Project, for example, there appears to have been little thought given to coordination between the clearance of the area and the relocation of residents. The area was slated for clearance before any real studies were conducted on relocation and the needs of the residents that were to be displaced. Much planning for the Near East Side was done a posteriori--after it was decided to be cleared and even, to a certain extent, after the area had been cleared.

The coordination of various departments dealing with codes and urban renewal is of even more importance when the shift of emphasis with respect to codes and other regulatory mechanisms due to Urban Renewal is considered. Urban Renewal and its Workable Program requirements have caused a change. "This is caused by the reorientation of enforcement from new construction to concentration upon the existing housing sector."³³ Because of this shift, blanket inspections of older areas such as the fringe area surrounding the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project site

³³ Ibid., p. 107.

have become common. This has emphasized the need for an inspector who will be fluent with all the codes--Building, Plumbing, Heating, Electrical, Housing, etc. These blanket inspections which have occurred in some areas are because the Federal Government "demands that the Local Public Agency seek to remedy all elements of deterioration in fringe areas, surrounding a clearance project."³⁴

The step-up of the code enforcement program was also due to a series of fatal slum fires which resulted in Mayor Mead calling for an improvement of slum areas.

Again another failure can be spotted for the fringe areas surrounding the Near East Side were not remedied of all elements of deterioration. The lack of coordination between relocation and code enforcement is obvious. Many people who were not given satisfactory choices of places to live, chose to move to the Southwest area (a fringe area around the Near East Side), leading to faster decay of the area. This augmented a problem, for the area did not have adequate code enforcement prior to this new, apparently unforeseen and unanticipated situation, that is people crowding into this already overcrowded area.

Urban Renewal recognized or was forced by the Federal government to recognize problems connected with renewal

³⁴Ibid., p. 109.

projects. However, this recognition did not lead to effective treatment of the problems. Urban Renewal admitted a problem existed and stated it should be handled in a certain manner, and then did not follow up with the implementation of the proposed treatment.

CHAPTER III

THE GENERAL PLAN

Prior to the American Society of Planning Officials' Report, efforts were being made to speed the planning for redevelopment of blighted areas. Of course this Report helped considerably in expediting slum clearance (with its recommendations of changing zoning ordinances and creating a department of urban renewal), but this was not solely responsible for bringing about changes in planning policies.

The important years in terms of tangible results in planning administration and policy establishment were those around the start of the Near East Side Project in 1958. In 1955 Mayor Donald H. Mead issued a statement which called for the drafting of a large-scale urban renewal program "without delay" and which "should be put into operation as soon as circumstances permit."³⁵ It was finally becoming clear to many that urban renewal was here to stay and could provide benefits.

In the view of the U. S. Housing Administrator, Albert M. Cole, cities like Syracuse

³⁵Statement by Mayor Mead, 1955, p. 4.

cannot afford not to undertake urban renewal programs. At the 1955 American Municipal Congress, Mr. Cole warned city officials, 'The people of any city without a comprehensive plan of action underway within the next five years at the latest will face bankruptcy in 1965.'³⁶

As a result of this growing concern an urban renewal agency was eventually formed in the City of Syracuse.

The recommendation of a comprehensive plan was partially fulfilled in 1958 with the issuance of a study entitled, Planning Central Area, Syracuse, 1958. As the title implied, it dealt exclusively with the central district. It was a detailed study of the area, investigating retail sales, assessment and taxation, land use, and traffic and parking. Recommendations were also found in this study. Besides proposals calling for the closing of certain streets for improvement of the traffic flow pattern, it was suggested that Salina Street be closed to rejuvenate downtown. Also included was mention of St. Mary's (Columbus) Circle as being a pedestrian mall and the creation of a County Community Plaza.

In 1959 the Department of City Planning put out another study, called A General Plan. It was a more comprehensive plan than the Planning Central Area plan because it included all of the City of Syracuse. The main reason

³⁶Ibid., p. 2.

for the development of this plan was that the Housing and Home Finance Agency required a general plan from local public agencies participating in the Slum Clearance and Urban Redevelopment Program that was authorized under the 1949 Housing Act, as amended. The purpose of the plan as stated besides satisfying the Federal Government was "to provide the local government, the business community, and the citizens of Syracuse with a dependable and practical guide to the city's future."³⁷

Although it was not stated, the effort to create the General Plan, as mentioned before, was not really due to the needs of the City of Syracuse itself. Rather it came about because funds for urban renewal from the Federal Government were needed and the only way to obtain these funds was to comply with government regulations--a major one being the requirement of a general plan to which all future urban renewal plans would conform.

Even though it was originally directed towards urban renewal, the resultant plan is a very comprehensive one dealing with many aspects of the city--some not even being directly associated with urban renewal projects. The foreward of this plan states that it is "a dispassionate appraisal of the community's achievements, assets, and

³⁷ A General Plan, Syracuse, New York, Introduction, 1959.

problems which we hope will serve as a guide to the further enhancement of our city."³⁸ The General Plan first presents a section entitled "Survey and Analysis." Here are found studies of existing conditions in the city, covering the following: I. Geographical Factors--The City and its Regional Setting; II. The Population of the Area; III. The Economy of the Area; IV. Land Use; V. Housing; VI. Community Facilities; VII. Transportation and Circulation; and VIII. Municipal Finance. It can be seen that it was a thorough plan directed not only at urban renewal, but at the general welfare of the City.

Perhaps what is more important in the General Plan in relation to future urban renewal plans is the section dealing with the plan itself--what was to be the mode of attack with respect to future development in Syracuse? Three areas which are investigated are housing and land use, transportation and circulation, and community facilities. Because of their proposed direct influence on future urban renewal plans, these are of interest to examine.

"The guidance and control of land development so that its use will be efficient and pleasant is one of the basic obligations and stewardships of a planning agency."³⁹

³⁸ Ibid., Foreward, p. i.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

With these words the General Plan broadly states its goals in the development of a land use plan. They are very general and nebulous goals. "It (land use plan) also is a vehicle for bringing to the public at large an understanding of its stake in a better and more productive Syracuse."⁴⁰ Further, "The land use plan seeks to assure that sufficient ground area will be available for expansion and rational conduct of existing activities."⁴¹

Basic considerations given in the land use plan are, indeed, very basic and elementary. Industrial areas were to be isolated from residential areas and the central business district, but were to be close to transportation facilities. Residential areas were to be located with schools and shopping areas nearby. Heavy traffic was to be isolated from residential areas and the central business district.

The goals and considerations stated in the General Plan with respect to residential land use and housing are the only ones that the writer was able to locate. More specifically because the goals with respect to commercial and residential land use and housing appear to be the ones followed in the planning of the Near East Side Urban Renewal

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Project and thus are a basis for what actually is there today, they warrant a reprinting in their entirety.

Commercial Land Use: the long range aim is to see the establishment of a hierarchy of groupings of business establishments. In the center of the city there will be a dynamic and attractive core devoted predominantly to retail sales, certain services and professional activities. The vitality of the city center depends, at least in part, on the neighboring public, civic, cultural and recreation activities. At a number of strategic locations throughout the city, shopping centers of intermediate size would cater to the major routine needs of nearby consumers. At the local level of day-to-day purchases, shopping districts should be interspersed in residential areas so that most families can find such facilities within walking distance.

The general plan seeks to provide such an arrangement while, at the same time, recognizing that loading facilities, parking, and vehicular access are essential to commercial establishments. There can be no interference, however, with the flow of through traffic. There is, as in the case of industrial areas, recognition of the need for appropriately sized contiguous areas for retail purposes. This will minimize any depreciating effect on neighboring properties.

Residential Land Use and Housing: Two related principles have guided the preparation of the housing portion of the general plan. First, the conviction that the general welfare can best be served when each household can obtain accommodations of the kind it desires and can afford. Second is the recognition that the welfare of the city and its economy, as well as that of the entire metropolitan area, hinge on attracting and holding a population level consistent with its growth potential. This requires that adequate housing of the kind desired by the population be made available.

The problem of developing satisfactory residential density standards for the city of Syracuse involves the reconciliation of two basic factors.

First: Sufficient provision must be made to accommodate a population of 225,000 which is expected approximately in the year 1975. As we have shown in Chapter IX, a population of this magnitude is not only consistent with past demographic trends, but it is also necessary if a sufficient labor force is to be provided to meet employment opportunities which will develop by that time. In fact, the economic development of the entire metropolitan area is, in substantial measure, contingent upon the employment growth in the City of Syracuse. Should the population and its inherent labor force decline below this volume, there is a strong likelihood that further outmigration of industry will occur, or that various business and ancillary establishments which serve industry will decline. Since services of this order are essential to the operation of the basic sources of metropolitan employment, the reduction in their quantity (sic) and quality will have serious adverse effects on the ability of the Syracuse area to attract and retain the various industrial uses upon which the community depends for its sustenance.

Second: Population density standards are neither rigorous nor immutable. Desirable density depends upon the size of the community, the amount of land available and the preferences of the population regarding housing types. Within a given community it is desirable and, in fact, necessary to have considerable range of population density. This allows for a high degree of choice on the part of the residents. Some prefer single family detached structures, while others tend to select apartment accommodations in multiple unit buildings. Some wish to reside as close as possible to the center of the city, while others, particularly families with children, prefer the more distant open surroundings. In addition to the personal preferences and inclinations of families, density standards must also take into consideration the number of people within any given area that are necessary to support a given level of commercial, community and municipal services. The lower the density, the greater the distance that people will have to travel to work, to shop, to school, and to their place of worship.

Moreover, certain types of services, such as specialized retail establishments and frequent and well distributed public transportation services, are entirely precluded if the population density is too low.

Sound standards of population density should represent levels of occupancy per acre that are consistent with the desire to avoid overcrowding of the land, with concomitant congestion and resultant social debilities. The levels of distribution of density should be consistent with the implicit desires of the Syracuse population as expressed in the more satisfactory areas of residential development. They should allow for variety within each of the stipulated density areas as well as among the various sections of the city, and provision should be made for the orderly growth and distribution of existing households and those that will come into existence in the next decade and a half.

In all, the density standards proposed for 1975 will be higher than those prevailing today. In a sense, this is a price of progress. Today we live more closely together than suited the tastes of grandfathers. But, by the same token, the enormous advance in mobility provides the means of reaching the open spaces and green areas that enriched residential life in the past. It must be remembered, too, that while density will rise, there will still be many sections of the city in which the standing home on an ample lot will be the characteristic use.

When these considerations are applied to Syracuse, the outline of the city as of 1975 begins to take shape. Increased overall densities are found in the in-town area. The city will be able to accommodate a greater number of people who want to shorten their journey to work at a major employment center, or who cherish a location close to the focus of urban life. In the aggregate, the increase in residential densities will noticeably reduce the total amount of necessary personal daily travel by increasing the quantity of housing close to contemplated concentrations of employment and trade. For those households that want to reside in low density surroundings, the plan envisages opportunities to do so in a variety of housing types ranging from the free standing one-family house to low-density clusters of strategically placed garden apartments.

Housing Plan: Each of the Planning Units will be subjected to a detailed analysis in the next stage of the planning program. Specific determination will be made of proposed densities. Local shopping areas will be pinpointed as a guide to zoning, and the location and size of community facilities will be determined. Each Planning Unit will be carefully studied to see what program of housing betterment or maintenance is appropriate. This is necessary, for, as each businessman or accountant knows, an investment such as a house begins to depreciate from the day it is completed. In general, one of three designations will be made to identify areas: (1) those which need conservation; (2) those which need to be rehabilitated; and, (3) those for which no course remains but total clearance and a chance to build anew.

Conservation measures are appropriate to areas of the city where the housing supply is of predominantly high quality but where problems of a very local nature may, unless resolved, bring blight to an ever-growing number of properties. The action needed here is maintenance of the random structure that does not generally comply with the health and safety standards of the community or those structures that present a shabby appearance to their neighborhood surroundings. Private owners and managers should be encouraged to invest in the upkeep of these properties. Adherence to health and safety standards should be insured through concentrated code enforcement in a systematic manner. At the same time, the City should improve its investment in those streets, community facilities, and public services which, according to established standards, are not at the highest level.

Rehabilitation is required where numerous residences reveal structural deficiencies and inadequate maintenance programs. Very often in these areas individual sub-standard slum structures have begun to "infect" the neighborhood. The City, too, may have become negligent, due to pressing obligations elsewhere, and may need to bring its resources to bear to complement and spur the private refurbishing of such areas.

Clearance and reconstruction is required when a point of no return has been reached. Here, abuse or misuse have progressed to such a degree that any other course is unthinkable. Lest an ever-growing portion of the city require

this expensive course of treatment, steps will be warranted at once to employ corrective measures in the conservation and rehabilitation areas. Syracuse can ill afford to close its eyes to the immediate problems of this nature, or to those which have not, as yet, reached crisis proportions.⁴²

These land use considerations resulted in the land use map (on the following page) for the Near East Side Project.

The development of plans for urban renewal sites (the Near East Side in particular) and this General Plan occurred almost simultaneously. They obviously reinforce each other. The land use considerations very well may have been already decided for the Near East Side before the General Plan was developed. Thus when the General Plan came about these considerations were restated as being the goals and objectives of the Near East Side plan.

Likewise is the situation with the transportation and circulation plan. For example, the closing of certain streets, such as Cedar Street, had already been decided upon before the General Plan. These decisions then had to be included in the General Plan.

A Community Plaza which was to be a governmental and cultural plaza had previously been incorporated into the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project Plan. It then had to be incorporated into the General Plan. Even though many

⁴² Ibid., pp. 53-54.

planning decisions had already been made prior to the General Plan, this plan was necessary and useful. Not only was it required with respect to obtaining funds as previously mentioned, but it also was needed to tie unrelated decisions into an overall plan for the City of Syracuse, a plan that would be coherent and not consist of isolated spot planning decisions, but rather relate the influence of all areas and aspects of planning to each other.

Before the General Plan of 1959 there were attempts to analyze and improve planning in Syracuse.⁴³ One plan that was put together was the Report of the Syracuse-Onondaga Post-War Planning Council of 1945, commonly known as the Post-War Report. Even though it deals with the County of Onondaga as well as the City of Syracuse, it is similar to the General Plan for it covers almost all variables that would enter into planning and states many of the needs of the area and recommendations as to how to fulfill these needs.

Included in the Post-War Report among other things is the recommendation of the creation of the Civic-University Fine Arts Center, "One of the most important projects in

⁴³ Post-War Report, 1945; "Syracuse Tackles Its Future," Fortune, May 1943, Volume XXVII, Number 5, p. 120.

Syracuse University's Post-War plan."⁴⁴ This Arts Center plan was due to the efforts of Sergei Grimm who at that time was Secretary and Executive Director of the Post-War Planning Council. (Grimm was later connected with the City Planning Commission.) In 1945 there was felt to be a need of such a fine-arts center. This idea although not followed according to the Post-War plans was later to be more fully realized with the Community Plaza of the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project.

The General Plan of 1959 (which superseded the Post-War Report) then was not an entirely new effort proposing totally new ideas. It was a culmination of many planning inputs prior to 1959. Its importance with respect to planning of urban renewal projects is that it was the plan to which all future projects, particularly the Near East Side, were to conform.

CONCLUSION

If the goals of the General Plan are also considered as those of the Near East Side Project then they have not been met. The purpose of the General Plan certainly is

⁴⁴The Report of the Syracuse-Onondaga Post-War Planning Council to the Citizens of the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County, 1945, p. 39.

logical and makes sense. A dependable and practical guide to the city's future obviously is desirable. As evidenced in the Near East Side Project, problem areas exist today. There are still littered vacant lots, Plaza 81 shopping area is an architectural fortress surrounded by roads and parking lots, the Everson Museum (apparently the extent of the magnificent proposed cultural plaza) in itself is a fine piece of architecture, but it suffers from its surroundings of messy parking areas and vacant sites. The General Plan was not used to bring coherence to the Near East Side Project or for that matter to the City. Although a proposed total coherent plan was to be followed for the development of the Near East Side, it was not used. (Buildings and sites are somewhat related, however, by the use of similar dull red-brown color facades.) Of course one reason why this original total coherent plan was not followed is due to the marketability and attractiveness of sites. Very little could be done with a site if a redeveloper were not found.

The General Plan was used primarily to satisfy the requirements of the Federal government. The Plan submitted by Syracuse although it contained many sincere planning policies directed at bringing about the fulfillment of the City's needs, was understandably aimed at winning the approval of the Federal government. Thus many of the goals

stated were what the Government wanted to hear. Desirable population densities, freedom of choice of type of living units, and attracting employment, are all things that cannot be argued against. They are obvious desirable conditions. Their total fulfillment does not seem to be possible, but they apparently had to be stated in order to release Government funds.

Therefore, the purpose of the General Plan cannot be to provide a practical and dependable guide to the City's future, although it was said to be this. In reality it appears that it was a lengthy, formal application to the Federal government for funds for a stated urban renewal program, the goals of which never really were obtained.

Expressing doubt about the effectiveness of general plans, Alan Altshuler states "I tend also to be extremely skeptical about the amount of influence that general plans are currently having on the physical development of American cities."⁴⁵ It seems then that general plans not only of Syracuse, but other American cities as well, have not had great influence on the planning and physical development of cities.

⁴⁵ Alan A. Altshuler, The City Planning Process (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press), p. 419.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNDERTAKING OF THE NEAR EAST SIDE

A question which has not really been satisfactorily answered is why the Near East Side was chosen as an urban renewal site. It is assumed by those involved with Urban Renewal and the Near East Side Project that the fact that the area was a "slum" was common knowledge. Mike Passerella of the Urban Renewal Agency described the area as the "tenderloin" of slums.⁴⁶ Hank Wilhelmi who was a city planner at the time of the Near East Side Project, said that there was no real plan to develop this area under Urban Renewal.⁴⁷ It was a poor area and everyone who was the least bit familiar with it knew that. The real trigger for the start of the project was a series of tragic fires in the Near East Side which took the lives of several children. Immediately there was a cry that something should be done. This led to the start of the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project.

George McCulloch who was director of Urban Renewal (or Urban Improvement as it was then called) during most

⁴⁶ Interview with Mike Passerella.

⁴⁷ Interview with Hank Wilhelmi.

of the Near East Side Project provided some interesting insights into the development of the area prior to its declaration as a formal urban renewal site.⁴⁸ The area, as stated before, was a poor one. At one time it was predominantly Jewish, but then the Blacks who had been living in the Washington Street area along the railroad tracks started to move in. This led to the deterioration of the area. Then (as previously mentioned) there was a series of fatal fires. This immediately led to a code enforcement program, but to rely upon this to improve the area was a hopeless attempt. It was at this time that Urban Renewal came along, offering money to communities to improve blighted areas of their cities. This offer was too attractive to turn down. Of course at this same time there were many who were skeptical of Urban Renewal. It was a relatively new program and people did not exactly know how to deal with it. Mayor Anthony A. Henninger was one such person. He was very skeptical. However, a trip to New Haven, Connecticut, changed his mind. It was here that he saw Urban Renewal working and could see that it did have benefits to the community. Upon returning, his support was given to the program, thus giving Urban Renewal in Syracuse the green light to go ahead.

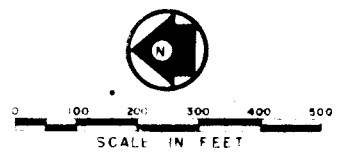
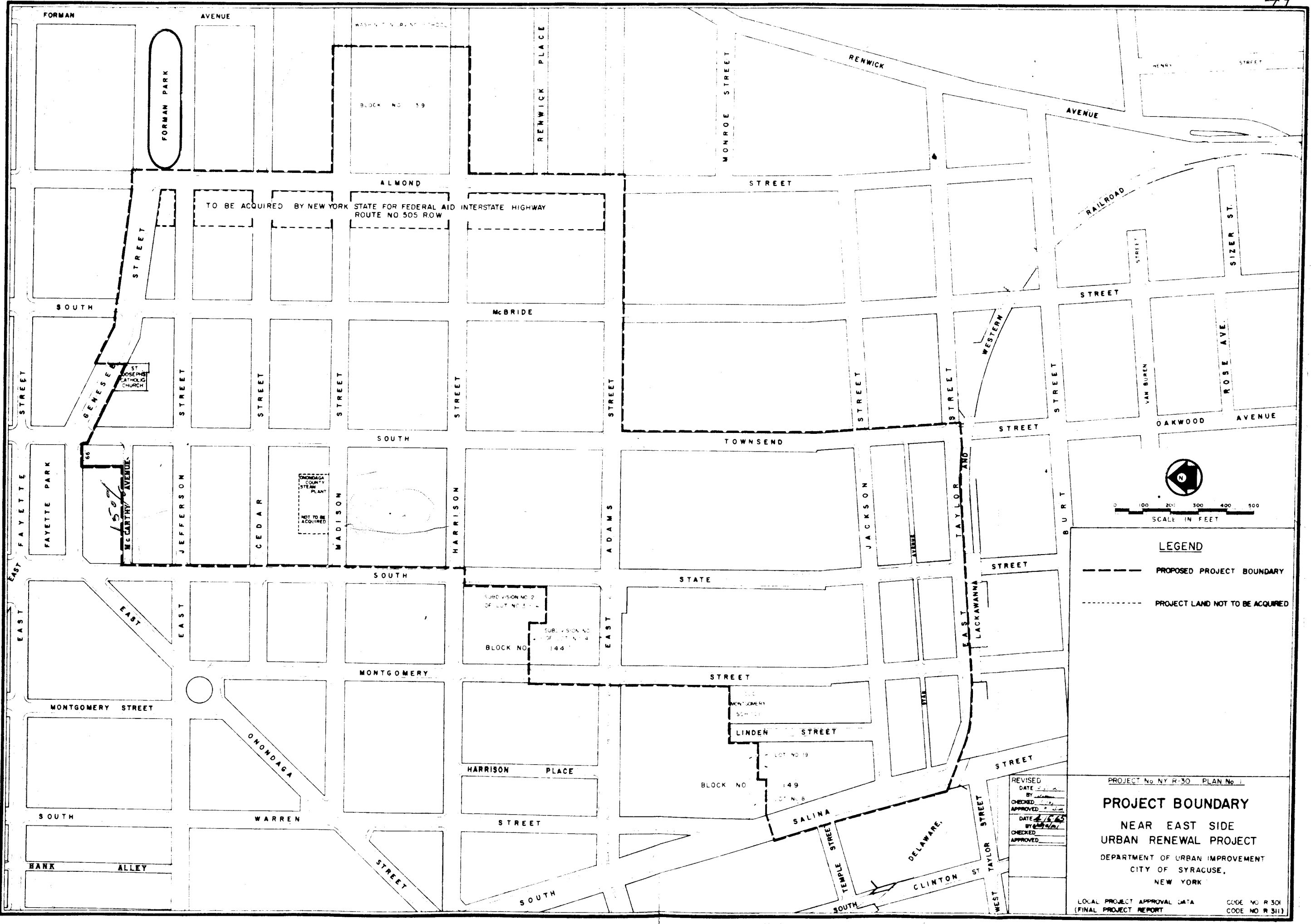
⁴⁸ Interview with George McCulloch



BOUNDARIES

There is no real documented justification for the establishment of boundaries of the Near East Side Project. (See map on following page.) It appears, however, that it was a fairly straightforward simple process of determination. According to Arthur J. Reed, director of Urban Improvement until 1958, and George McCulloch, director thereafter, physical elements were the major decision-making device employed in establishing boundary lines.⁴⁹ Major factors involved in terms of physical elements were the proposed Route 81, Pioneer Homes public housing site, the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad tracks, Salina Street, and Central Tech High School. The rest of the boundaries were determined by the cost of acquiring sites, the soundness of buildings, and in general, the economic feasibility of acquiring, clearing, and developing the site. There were a few cases of changing original boundary decisions. For example, the acquisition of St. Joseph's French Church along East Genesee Street was not accomplished until 1967 when the Federal Government increased the amount of the loan and capital grant contracts to Syracuse. With more money available, Urban Renewal was able to purchase the

⁴⁹ Interviews with Arthur Reed and George McCulloch.



LEGEND

----- PROPOSED PROJECT BOUNDARY

..... PROJECT LAND NOT TO BE ACQUIRED

PROJECT No. NY R-30 PLAN No. 1

PROJECT BOUNDARY

NEAR EAST SIDE

URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN IMPROVEMENT

CITY OF SYRACUSE,

NEW YORK

REVISED	DATE
CHECKED	BY
APPROVED	DATE
CHECKED	BY
APPROVED	DATE

LOCAL PROJECT APPROVAL DATA (FINAL PROJECT REPORT)

CODE NO. R 301

CODE NO. R 311

church which they had hoped to do right from the start of the boundary establishments.

One area where an appendage in the boundary line appears, extending to the east of proposed Route 81 (a definite boundary) and Almond Street, seems to be questionable at first glance. There is a reason for it, however. As explained by Arthur Reed, this area was extremely blighted and it was felt that it would be beneficial to include it into the Near East Side Project. Thus Washington Irving School, served as the eastern boundary with the block to be utilized as a playground opening up onto the rest of the Near East Side. (Today this site is not used as a playground, but rather for the Central New York Psychiatric Center.)

The establishment of boundaries seemed to be straightforward. There was no pressure from landowners to have Urban Renewal include their site into the project because it would be financially advantageous to them. It seems that it took several years of operation of the Federal Urban Renewal Program before people began to realize that they could exploit it and gain personal financial benefits from it.⁵⁰

⁵⁰See Urban Renewal in the District of Columbia; Hearings before Subcommittee 4 of the Committee on the District of Columbia, House of Representatives, Eighty-Eighth Congress (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1964).

TOTAL CLEARANCE

The decision of total clearance for the area seems to have one very simple justification. That is, the area was so bad in terms of deteriorating structures, etc., that total clearance was the only answer. Rehabilitation was ruled out mainly because many of the structures in the area were not worth saving, but also because, according to George McCulloch, the Department of Housing and Urban Development would not have known exactly how to handle rehabilitation for it had not become a common procedure in urban renewal. There was another factor in the determination of total clearance. Although there were some sound structures in the area worth saving such as synagogues, Mr. McCulloch feels that if these were left they would have become "islands" with no congregation to support them. This same reasoning can be applied to the question of total clearance at one time. If clearance were done piecemeal, customers for businesses in the area would start to dwindle in numbers as they were forced to move out. Some businesses, of course, were not solely dependent upon local residents for clientele. Eventually though the businesses that were dependent upon local area residents would either go broke or be forced to move out.

Although it was planned to complete total clearance as soon as possible after it started, it still created

hardships for residents of the area. In particular small businesses were affected the greatest. Even before clearance actually began people were starting to move out perhaps because they knew that eventually they would be forced out. Small businesses such as Myron Small's hardware store found their customers slowly beginning to leave. With clearance starting to surround Small's store, he faced the realization that he would have to surrender to Urban Renewal and move out. For Myron Small, as well as other businessmen, it was not a pleasant fact. Mr. Small stated, "I'd have to relocate downtown or in a shopping center and both would cost too much in rent and taxes. The tearing up all around and the cutting off of streets leaves me like an island."⁵¹ Total clearance at one time was felt to alleviate this problem somewhat. Even though compensation was given to businesses it did not eliminate hardships created by the Project as evidenced by Myron Small.

CONDITIONS BEFORE CLEARANCE

In a Project Eligibility and Relocation Report submitted on September 26, 1958, to the Housing and Home Finance Agency, Urban Renewal Administration, the Near East Side was characterized as being "deteriorating predominantly

⁵¹Post Standard, July 26, 1963.

residential."⁵² There were to be 103.1 acres in the total project area of which 102.6 acres were to be acquired. (See maps on the following pages.) The remaining one-half acre was the County Steam Plant. Of the total 686 structures involved, 507 were found to be in substandard condition. In terms of number of dwelling units there were 1,692 total and only 346 of these were standard in condition. This meant 1,346 substandard units. The total number of occupied units was 1,614--1,271 substandard and 343 standard. In the 524 white occupied units, 434 were substandard and 90 standard. Non-white occupied units were counted as being 1,090 in number. Of these, 837 were substandard and 253 were standard. It can be seen that the area was predominantly substandard and the majority of residents were non-white. Further describing the area of the Near East Side, the Eligibility Report states that a survey taken in July and August of 1958 showed that there were many cases of incompatible uses mixed in with residential structures. Such incompatible uses were listed as junk yards, auto repair shops, a factory, and other commercial establishments. Many of these were found to be "sources of dirt, noise, odors, crowding, and visual disorder."⁵³

⁵²Project Eligibility and Relocation Report, September 26, 1958, Binder No. 9.

⁵³Ibid.

Several heavy-traffic streets were found in the area, one being the main north-south truck route. These were considered sources of inconvenience, congestion, and danger.

Recreational and community facilities for the area were also found to be inadequate. Only one small playground was within the Project area and another small one just outside.

Using the U.S. Census of 1.5 or more persons per room as constituting overoccupancy, the report found 17.6 per cent of all family units overcrowded. Using the Syracuse Housing Authority standard of more than two persons per bedroom as constituting overoccupancy, the report found 22.7 per cent of all family units overcrowded. The problem of overoccupancy was most acute in large families (of six or more). Here 44 per cent of all family units were overcrowded (1.5 or more persons per room), or 54 per cent (two or more persons per bedroom).

In summary this early report found that of the residential structures 82.4 per cent were substandard. (Residential structures comprised 73.9 per cent of all structures in the Project area.) 52.3 per cent of all non-residential structures were substandard. Of all the structures in the area 74.1 per cent were found to be substandard. The pattern

that was found throughout the entire area was a consistent one of deterioration and mixed use. "This pattern appears to make it unfeasible to consider rehabilitation of portions of the area as a means of arresting the spread of blight."⁵⁴ Therefore the area was slated for total clearance (the County Steam Plant being the only exception.).

RELOCATION

Associated with any Urban Renewal project, particularly one that involves total clearance such as the Near East Side is the problem of relocation. The Eligibility and Relocation Report lists detailed tables covering estimated housing requirements and resources for displaced families. The tables are broken down into white, non-white categories, list the incomes of all groups and list the availability of housing with respect to white and non-white in terms of public housing, standard private rental housing, and standard sales housing. The last two are further broken down into various gross monthly rentals and sales price. Out of all this came the conclusion that there would be "no insurmountable deficits of supply as far as the needs of the families to be displaced are concerned."⁵⁵ In the early

⁵⁴ Ibid., Eligibility Data, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Relocation Data, p. 9.

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⁵⁴Ibid., Eligibility Data, p. 2.

⁵⁵Ibid., Relocation Data, p. 9.

to mid-1950's Sergei Grimm, who was connected with the Syracuse Housing Authority and Planning Commission, was a key figure in pushing for the development of public housing sites as a means of helping the problem of Urban Renewal relocation.⁵⁶ One problem associated with relocation as pointed out by Mike Passarella of the Urban Renewal Agency is that even though people in the Near East Side were offered a place to live by Urban Renewal, many chose to turn it down.⁵⁷ Because the choices offered were many times located a great distance from the Near East Side, people would say, "Why should I move there? It's farther from where I work. I'd have to take the bus. Why should I move there when I can find on my own, housing nearby?" This is exactly what many people did--they chose to find their own housing with many moving to the adjacent southwest area and northeast area, but the majority to the southwest. This created a problem which has been cited by many (Mike Passarella, Dick Hueber, Hank Wilhelmi) as a fault

⁵⁶One such housing project was that proposed for Velasco Road and Rowland Street (Post Standard, Aug. 7, 1955). It was met with violent opposition (Post Standard, Aug. 17, 1955). This resulted in the start of a Scattered Site Housing Program (Post Standard, Oct. 5, Dec. 25, 1955). Grimm's efforts were not always well-received. He was relieved of some of his duties as Secretary of the Syracuse Housing Authority, enabling him to spend more time on other tasks, allowing him to do a better job at these (Post Standard, Feb. 8, 1953).

⁵⁷The above information as to the condition of the area before urban renewal and the problem of relocation (based on statistics, etc.) was taken from a preliminary

of the total clearance policy of the Near East Side. What it did was actually push the problem elsewhere. People in moving to the southwest area resulted in a condition of overcrowding of an already crowded area. (See map on the following page.) This ultimately led to a faster deterioration of the area.

THE PROCESS OF RENEWAL

As delineated in a 1963 Annual Report issued by the City of Syracuse, Department of Urban Improvement, the process of Urban Renewal can be broken down into three main categories. These are acquisition, post-acquisition, and disposition and development.⁵⁸ The development of the Near East Side will be traced in terms of these categories.

Acquisition--Land which is to be cleared and redeveloped (in this case virtually all 101 acres of the Near East Side) is acquired by either negotiation or condemnation. All property, however, is eventually put into condemnation. This allows for the situation where a strip of land might not be covered in a property description. In

report, Project Eligibility and Relocation Report. It was the only documented information on relocation that I was able to locate. I was unable to obtain the original applications (Survey and Planning, and Grant). (See Appendix E.)

⁵⁸1963 Annual Report, pp. 10-19.

the case of the Near East Side property was acquired in stages "so that property management, relocation, and clearance can be handled efficiently and so that the land will be redeveloped as soon as possible after clearance."⁵⁹

Post-Acquisition--Once the land is acquired residents pay rent to the Project. The Near East Side Project, now the landlord, is obligated to properly maintain the property. This was somewhat of a problem, with the Project having to face vandalism of vacant buildings, junk cars, and litter. The Project was also responsible for maintaining essential services to the area. A major case in hand was a supermarket in the area. It soon became the only place left for people in the area to shop. The supermarket decided to close because of the drop-off in business, but Urban Renewal, realizing its obligation of providing essential services to the area, offered it a lower rent, thus postponing the supermarket moving out.

Once residents decide to move or are displaced, they become eligible for moving and relocation payments as well as assistance in finding new homes. Besides this direct assistance from Urban Renewal, another aid in relocation in the Near East Side was the creation of the Interfaith Sponsorship Program which took an interest in the

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 10.

understanding of individual problems connected with moving. It was run by church groups who met with the family and discussed their plans and desires and then relocation needs were decided upon. With these things in mind the group attempted to find the family suitable housing. Also created to help with relocation were the Housing and Family Relocation Committee and the Social Service Advisory Committee.⁶⁰ These services gave residential, commercial and institutional relocation assistance.

Buildings are demolished as soon as possible after acquisition and relocation of tenants is accomplished. Buildings to be cleared are demolished under contract to the qualified lowest bidder.

Also occurring in the post-acquisition period are project improvements. In the Near East Side, street and sewer modifications were considered as project improvements. (See Appendix B.)

Disposition and Redevelopment--As in most urban renewal projects, the land in the Near East Side Project was acquired, cleared, and then sold at a writedown to a redeveloper.

⁶⁰ These three organizations, the Interfaith Sponsorship Program, the Housing and Family Relocation Committee, and the Special Service Advisory Committee are apparently no longer in existence. The Urban Renewal Agency and the Metropolitan Church Board of the Syracuse Area had no available information on these organizations.

After two separate appraisals to determine market value a minimum land price is set. The property is then acquired. The sale of the land can be through competitive bidding, negotiation, or by offering in competition based on design.

Sites 2, 2a, and 3, today known as Presidential Plaza, were offered for sale to private developers. The development of it was a result of a design-based competition. (See Chapter VI.) Sites 8 and 8a were sold by a negotiated sale. Sites 10, 11, and 12, (Mulberry Square) were offered for lower middle-income housing under FHA 221(d)(3) financing. The redeveloper was also chosen by competition. (See Chapter VI.) Community Plaza, Site 1, was reserved for the City as redeveloper. (See Chapter V.)

With the process of urban renewal outlined, the objectives and design criteria that were used for the Near East Side in general now need to be explored. As stated in the Urban Renewal Plan for the Near East Side Project, the objectives listed were in accordance with the General Plan of the City of Syracuse. The objectives were threefold:

- A. The clearance, replanning, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of a substandard and unsanitary area, as provided under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, and Article XVIII of the Constitution of the State of New York.
- B. The assembly and disposal of cleared sites, the sound redevelopment of which is vital to the continued growth and prosperity of the Central City.

- C. The creation of a desirable neighborhood, effectively combining residential, public, institutional, and commercial uses, to the ultimate benefit not only of Central City residents and enterprises, but of the entire community.⁶¹

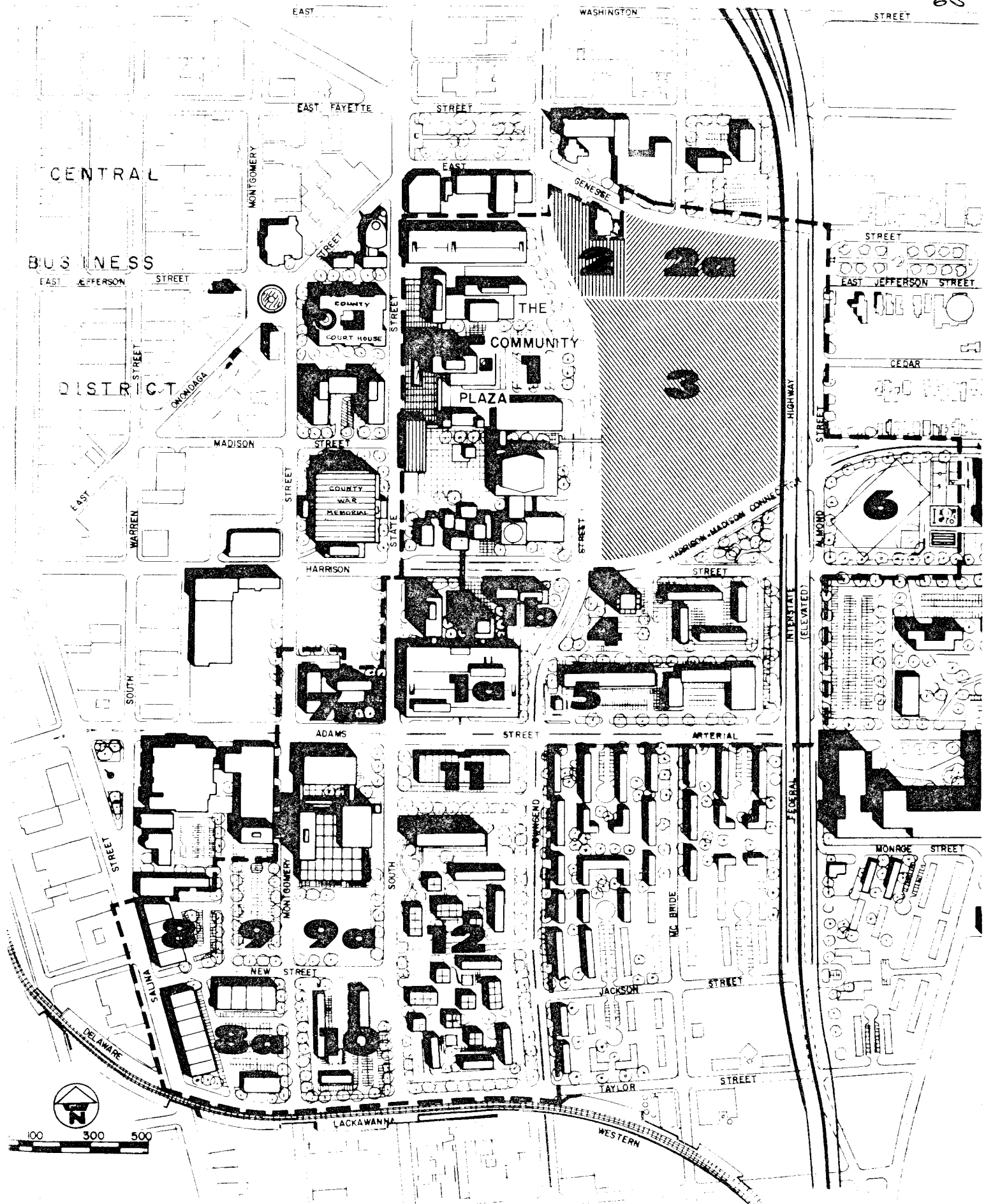
These objectives were directed towards revitalizing the central business district of the City. They were to make "the heart of the City more attractive as a place in which to live, shop, work, and play."⁶² One of the attempts to achieve these ends was the redevelopment of Community Plaza. (See Chapter V.) Private redevelopers were to take into account the basic land use of the site and the specific building requirements and also "the massing, orientation, and spatial relationship of structures with respect to adjacent sites, as well as the proposed system of connecting streets, pedestrianways, and open spaces."⁶³ In addition it is stated in the objectives of the Urban Renewal Plan that private redevelopers were to make their designs an integral part of an attractive neighborhood.

Street and traffic flow patterns if they were to be changed would be carefully staged so as not to disrupt the existing traffic movement.

⁶¹Urban Renewal Plan, Near East Side Project N.Y. R-30,
p. 1.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.



ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN
NEAR EAST SIDE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

Lastly it is stated that careful consideration was to be given to yard setbacks and open space requirements so as to allow the Near East Side area to "literally be a green spot in the heart of the Central City."⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

One of the problems of the Near East Side Project was that there appears to have been little planning before the Project was undertaken. This problem manifests itself when looking at relocation. Urban Renewal made little attempt to provide adequate compensation for displaced families. Of course these people were provided with financial assistance, but what really mattered was a place to live. Urban Renewal might just as well not have offered any choices of new living units than to have offered what they did. It is understandable that people declined places that were far from their old neighborhood and places of work and would be completely foreign to them without any familiar faces. Part of the problem lies with the fact that this situation was unanticipated by the local Urban Renewal Agency. It seems that the Near East Side Project came about after a few people got together one night and decided that since the area was so bad, something should be done. This resulted in slating the area for total clearance. As an

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 2.

afterthought the problem of relocation was considered. The Project Eligibility Report does state that there was adequate housing resources available, but to many people these resources were so undesirable that there may have just as well been no housing supplies available. The area of relocation should have been given more attention and consideration with the desires and needs of the displaced being more fully investigated. As mentioned before the end result was a large movement to the Southwest area and the creation of a new slum.

Small business relocation also suffered from the same treatment. The only alternatives suggested to merchants were undesirable because they were very dissimilar from their old area conditions.

The objectives set forth for the Near East Side were not completely fulfilled. A "desirable neighborhood" was not created. The Near East Side today consists of isolated areas--completely unrelated islands further cut off from each other by a sea of roads. Before clearance heavy traffic streets were found in the area. Today the situation is perhaps even worse. There is little opportunity to walk. The only real pedestrian connection is the traffic light for pedestrian crossing of East Adams Street--from Pioneer Homes public housing to Plaza 81 shopping area.

As stated before in the objectives private redevelopers were to take into account "the massing, orientation, and spatial relationship of structures with respect to adjacent sites, as well as the proposed system of connecting streets, pedestrianways, and open spaces." This appears to have been completely ignored. Of course there is a collection of connecting streets and there are open spaces (vacant sites), but these in themselves are not to be considered parts of a desirable neighborhood.

In the 1963 Annual Report it was stated that land was to be redeveloped as soon as possible after clearance. This has not occurred. Today there are still vacant sites. What aggravates this situation is that Urban Renewal is not properly maintaining these sites--today they can be considered eyesores.

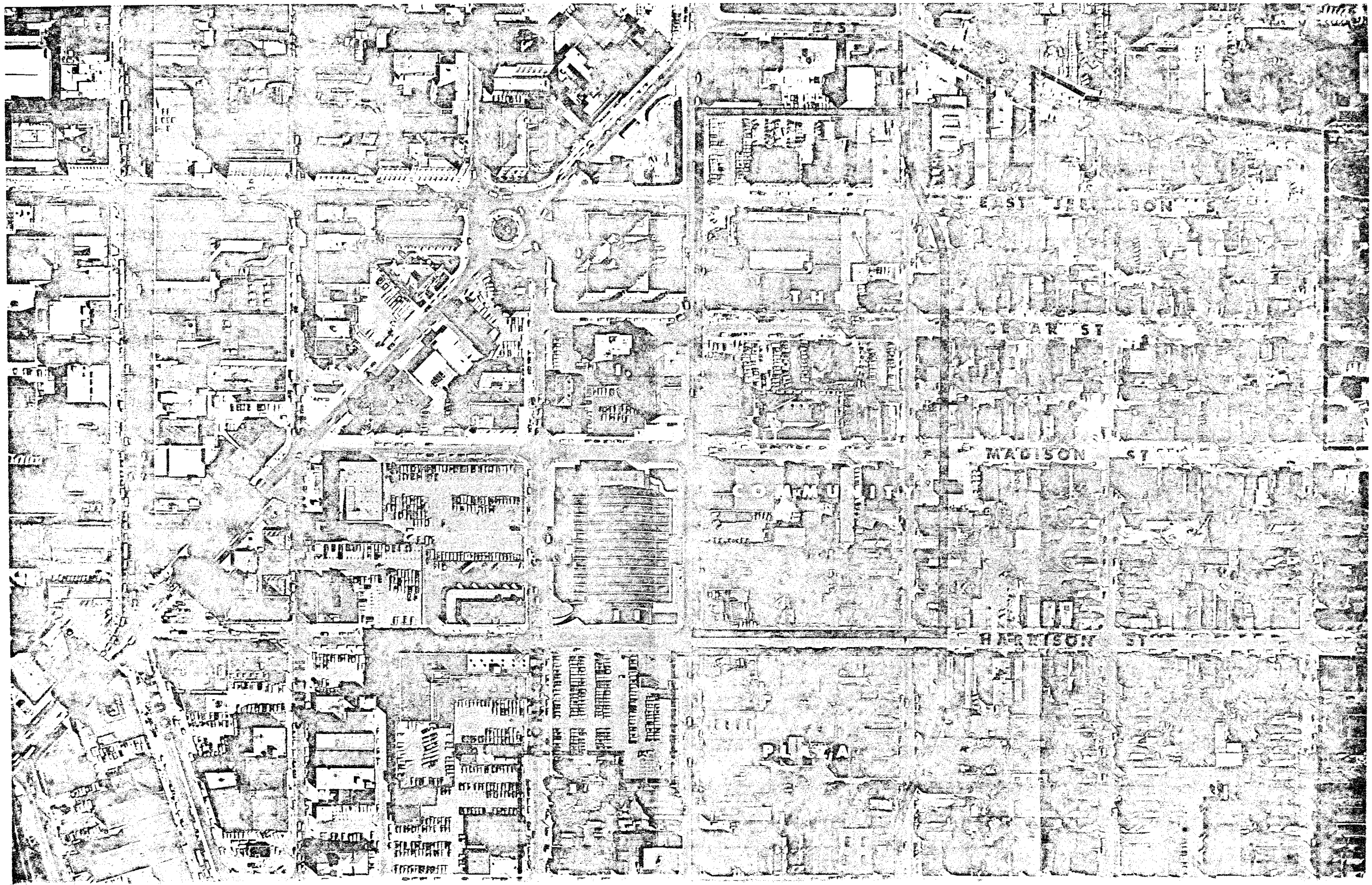
Some of these problems perhaps could have been avoided if there were more comprehensive planning of the Project and if there were better organization so as to help eliminate the great time lag that has occurred between clearance and redevelopment. More comprehensive planning and better organization are not the only answers to this problem. What seemed to occur in the Near East Side is that there was not sufficient demand for the oversupply of cleared land--market demands were not correctly predicted.

CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY PLAZA

One of the major developments that was to be undertaken in the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project is that of a community plaza. The idea of having a major public area serving the needs of the community was included in the Post-War Report. The Near East Side plans also included such a public area. It was considered such a major part of the total plan that a study presentation report was put together on the proposed plaza. This report which was published in 1960 was under the direction of coordinating architects, Ketcham-Miller-Arnold & Gordon P. Schopfer, AIA, and four consulting teams, Victor Gruen Associates, Raymond & May Associates, McKee-Berger-Mansuato, Inc., and Robson and Woese Inc. The Community Plaza was envisioned to be a dual-purpose civic center composed of a "Governmental Area--for economic centralization of City and County governmental facilities," and a "Cultural Area--for the concentration of major cultural facilities for the community."⁶⁵ The purpose behind the Plaza as stated in the report was to strengthen the central area of downtown

⁶⁵ Community Plaza Report, 1960, p. 1.



Syracuse. In the study this central district was pictured as the heart of the Syracuse area. If the heart were not strong, then the areas surrounding it and depending upon it would not be strong and would begin to fall. Conversely with a strong heart or central district, then a healthy, thriving surrounding area would be resultant. It was with these beliefs that the plans for the Community Plaza were developed. Basically the planners envisioned the Plaza on a 14-acre site, Site 1, adjacent to the east side of the War Memorial. In these 14 acres were to be a City-County Public Safety Building, Public Parking Garage, City Hall, Music Hall, Fine Arts Museum, Natural and Human History Center, Industrial Museum, and a Public Pavilion Restaurant, as well as the existing County Steam Plant. Obviously this Community Plaza was meant to be a major development in the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project. Describing the Community Plaza the report said that it:

...will provide one of the outstanding governmental and cultural centers in the country. As a showcase of community progress, it will encourage new industrial and commercial enterprises to locate in this area. The Plaza will also draw tourists, visitors, and shoppers to partake of the fuller life of the metropolitan area of Syracuse, and will thus be a vital factor in the maintenance of the central core.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Ibid.

The structures in the Plaza as well as the retail shopping district of the central core were to be linked by a series of greenways and pedestrian malls.

A short insight as to the process of a central core deterioration is given in the introduction of the Community Plaza Report. The problem as stated is that most American cities grew around a core that was originally planned for a limited size community. In recent years, population growth has been great which resulted at first in the prosperous growth of the central core. However, with the continued increase in development and number of people, the core became surrounded and more or less choked off, resulting in the beginning of its deterioration. The rate of deterioration increased as the living habits of people changed. With great dependency on the car, people were now mobile and seeing that the central core no longer adequately fulfilled their needs of shopping and entertainment, many chose to go elsewhere. The central core was becoming obsolete.

Syracuse fit this classic pattern. The study states that because most public buildings were constructed around the end of the nineteenth century when the area population was approximately 275,000, they were now unable to adequately meet the needs of a 1960 population of 500,000. Further people now had the alternative of shopping centers which were more convenient in terms of parking and avoidance of traffic congestion than was the downtown shopping district.

The Community Plaza Study felt, however, that these problems confronting the central core were not adequate reasons to abandon it. Since Syracuse originally grew from the center area, it was here that many activities became centered such as government of the city, regional trade and businesses, and cultural activities. Likewise many institutions and churches had established here. The central area served as "a depository of the roots of life of the community."⁶⁷ The study group felt that the heritage that had been established should not be destroyed and, therefore, recommended a policy of rehabilitation and renewal for the area. The goals set forth for rehabilitation of the central area are as follow:

1. encourage the most productive and intensive land use in the central area;
2. provide an adequate road network connecting the entire metropolitan area to the central core;
3. make adequate provision for traffic circulation, vehicular storage, and ease of movement within the central area;
4. create clearly defined and separated areas of pedestrian, vehicular, and service activities;
5. re-integrate the cultural, economic, and recreational functions of the central area of the community.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

It has been pointed out that the Community Plaza was to be linked to the central business district by a series of pedestrian walkways and greenways. This was necessary if the Plaza were to be successfully integrated with the central core. It was also an attempt to avoid the predicament that the central core had previously been in--that of being completely surrounded, isolated, and choked off from the rest of the community. With the Plaza linked with the central business district, it allowed room for expansion. The eventual expansion of the Community Plaza itself was provided in the use of the block south of the Plaza, bounded by South Townsend, Harrison, East Adams, and South State Streets. This block was proposed to be used for a high-density office or Plaza expansion development. The possible uses which were being considered as being Plaza expansion were a Community College, an Agricultural Activities Center, or a Federal Office Building. As an encouragement to attract this expansion a 1,500 car public parking garage was proposed for construction in the Near East Side Project.

Two key elements of the city core according to the Community Plaza study were the interplay of activity and mutual interest between the central business district and the Plaza. The physical connection between the two was to be with the pedestrian mall. This link was also to provide

functional ties between the Plaza and central business district. As stated in the report:

- the Plaza will be a generator of activity and attraction for shoppers;
- it provides major downtown parking facilities;
- it provides tractor-train transportation from the Community Plaza to South Salina Street;
- it develops East Jefferson Street as a major pedestrian mall, linking South Salina Street with the Community Plaza;
- it provides attractive recreational area, which will make working and just being downtown more enjoyable.⁶⁹

In the Community Plaza plans, existing County structures were incorporated. The County Court House, Office Building, and War Memorial by being included in the plans helped to create a true plaza. These existing buildings were to form the east side of the plaza while new structures formed the other three. It was felt that this would not only use to best advantage the existing County buildings, but also speed up the eventual completion of a large public square. The existing buildings would also help to bring the Plaza and central business district one step closer to becoming truly integrated.

Pedestrian and vehicular traffic was one of the important considerations in the Community Plaza study. In order to be a "plaza" and to tie the shopping area of the central core and the Plaza, areas were to be designated as

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 7.

pedestrian only. With the exclusion of vehicles from the Plaza itself, it meant that surrounding roads were to receive a larger volume of traffic. Generally the goals used in determining the vehicular circulation pattern were: there was to be service access to all buildings; parking facilities were to have easy vehicular access; and there was to be the creation of a Plaza environment which would be traffic-free, allowing for a serene, safe and relaxed atmosphere.⁷⁰

From a detailed study covering traffic volume flow, pedestrian movement, and employment in the area it was found that much traffic was transitory and was destined for places outside of the area. Incorporated into this study were the 1959 plans of the State Department of Public Works which included the development of arterials and expressways in the vicinity of the Plaza. In these plans the downtown area was to be completely enclosed by an inner loop to be composed of an East-West Expressway on the north (Route 690), a North-South Expressway on the east (Route 81), the West Street Arterial on the west, and Adams Street on the south. (See diagram on the following page.) Adams Street was to be widened and serve as an arterial. Access

⁷⁰Ibid.

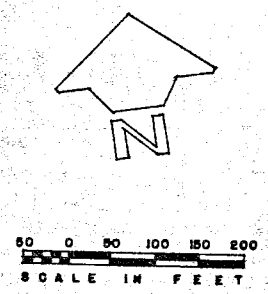
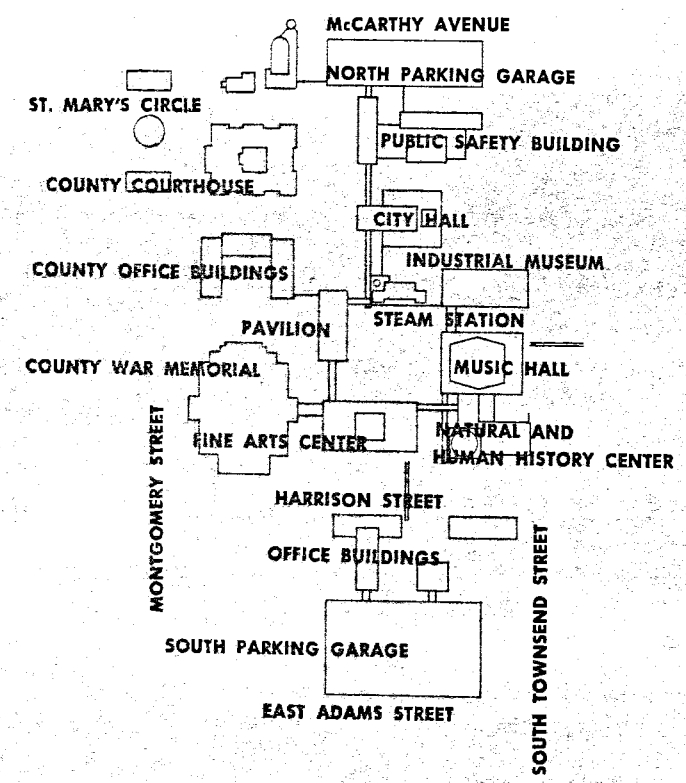
into the downtown area would be provided by two "core" loops, one formed by Erie Boulevard, Warren, Harrison, and Clinton Streets; the other by Washington-Fayette, Townsend, Harrison, and Warren Streets. Implementing this desired traffic circulation pattern and providing a vehicle-free pedestrian environment would be the closing of various streets. State Street would be closed with traffic being rerouted onto Townsend Street. This was to unite St. Mary's (Columbus) Circle, a "religious-institutional center, with the governmental-cultural plaza."⁷¹ Other pedestrian links were to be provided by closing Jefferson Street connecting the Plaza and the central business district and by the construction of pedestrian bridges over Townsend and Harrison Streets connecting residential, office, and parking areas with the Plaza. Because the rerouting of traffic would lead to larger traffic volume flow on various streets West, East Adams, Townsend, and Harrison were proposed to be widened and improved.

Even though this traffic and circulation plan was thoroughly studied before presented, it still was objectionable to some people. The Automobile Club of Syracuse was against the closing of several arterials in the area.⁷²

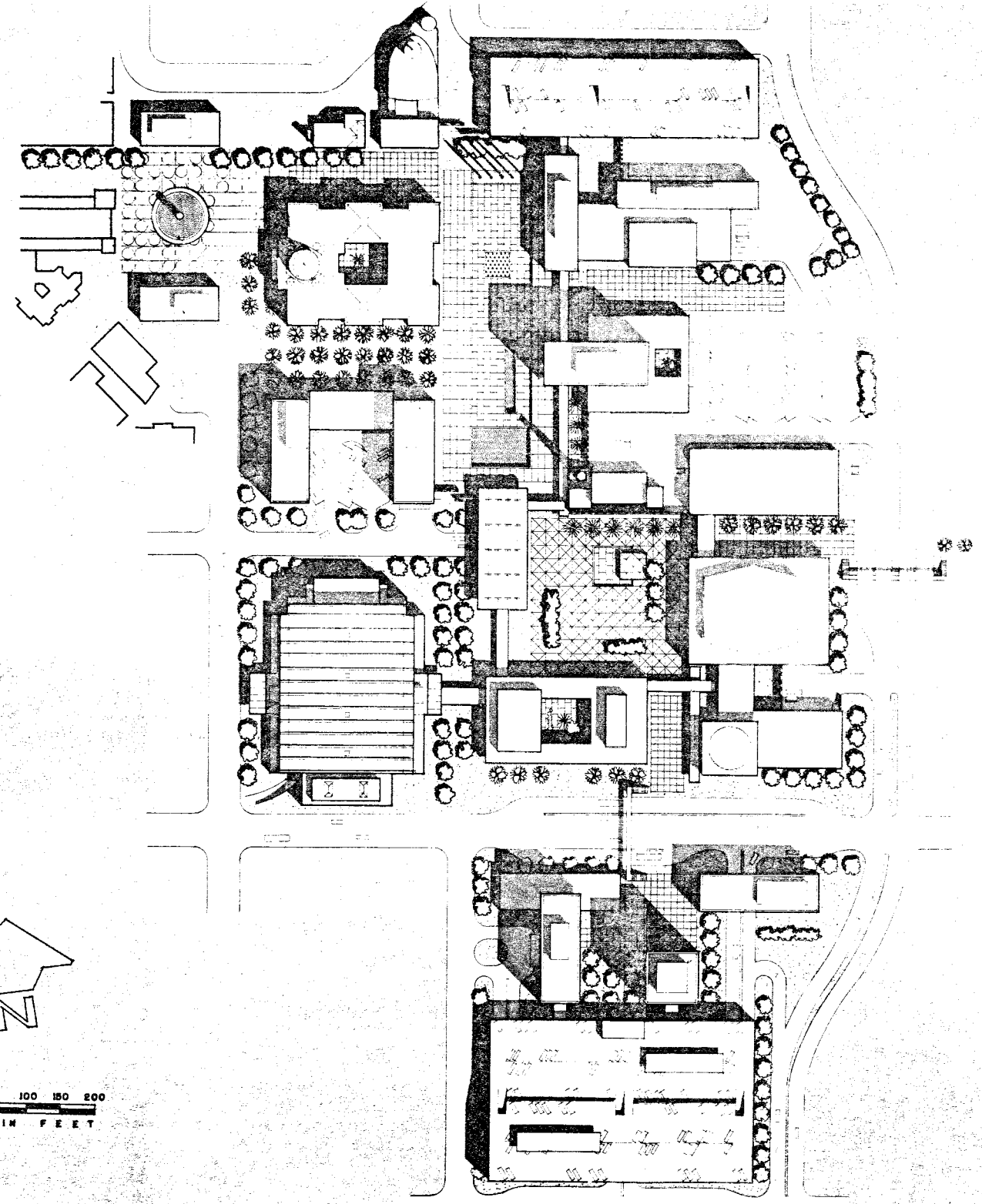
⁷¹Ibid., p. 32.

⁷²Herald Journal, May 20, 1960.

ORIGINAL
COMMUNITY PLAZA
SITE PLAN



Plaza Site Plan



On the whole, however, this portion of the plan as well as most of the plans for the Near East Side seemed to pass without much objection.

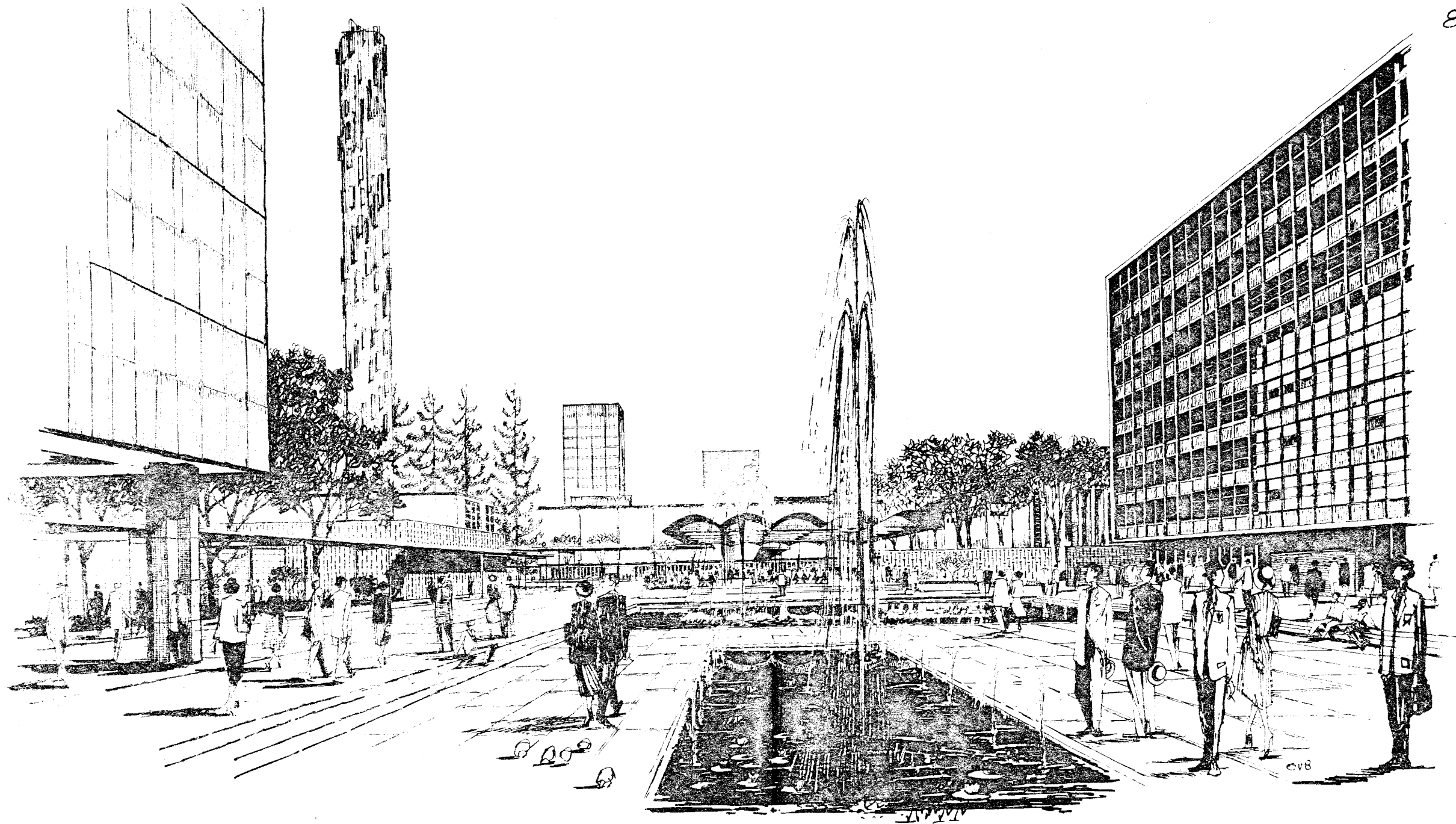
As a closing note on the circulation plan connected with the Community Plaza, the study suggested changes which would eliminate all traffic from St. Mary's (Columbus) Circle. It is stated, however, that there were to be provisions made allowing the Circle to be used for occasional religious processions and funeral corteges.⁷³

The Plaza was to be separated into two areas, the formal, governmental plaza and the informal, cultural plaza. Even though there was some attempt to separate them by the placement of the structures (only a relatively small open space to connect the two was allowed), the separation of these two plazas was to be created by the character of each--the governmental containing the County Court House, new City Hall, and other governmental structures, was to be almost austere in design with very distinct geometric definitions. This plaza was to "express the efficiency of the City and County governmental functions."⁷⁴

The cultural plaza was to be characterized by "the atmosphere of festive activities, including trees, seating

⁷³ Community Plaza Report, p. 7.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 14.

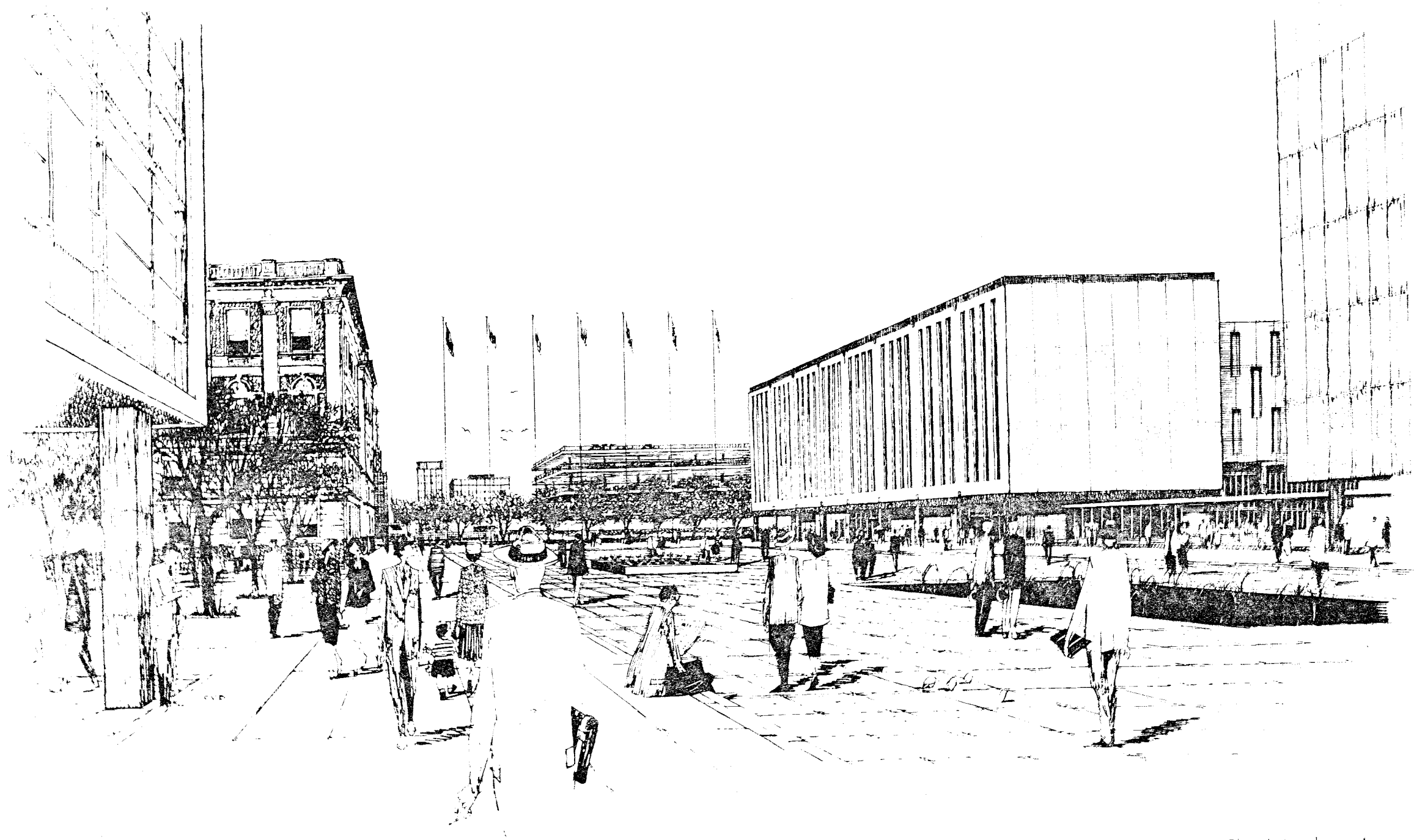


Community Plaza
Sketch 3

This illustration presents a view of the southern portion of the governmental mall. In the foreground can be seen the reflecting pool with the fountains playing in front of the pavilion structure. On the left is the covered walkway connecting the buildings. Also visible is the existing steam plant. The existing County Office Building and Cedar Street mall are seen on the right.

The open design of the pavilion affords a view into the informal mall beyond. Access to this area is clearly defined by the covered walk.

The high-rise office units beyond Harrison Street are shown above the Fine Arts Building.



COMMUNITY PLAZA
Sketch 5

The northern portion of the governmental mall can be seen in this drawing from a point of view just in front of the Pavilion and fountains.

To form the northern termination of this mall, movement and color have been introduced by a series of flags. On the left are the County Office Building and Court

House, with the new First Methodist Church just beyond the East Jefferson Street entrance to this mall.

The Public Safety Building provides the beginning of the covered walkway. This covered area leads to the northern garage and gives protection from the hot sun and inclement weather. In the far right foreground the mass of the new City Hall is outlined.

for groups, and indoor and outdoor concert areas."⁷⁵ This plaza, containing the Fine Arts Center, Pavilion, Music Hall, and other cultural attractions, was not only meant to draw people for its cultural aspects, but also was to be a place where people would just come, sit and relax while they were shopping in the nearby central business district.

Also serving as a visual separation between the two plazas was the County Steam Plant. Since it could never be hidden because of its prominent smoke stack, the planners decided to use it as a design element--the steam plant, being at the point where the plazas merged, was to be a focal point with the smoke stack treated as a sculpture.

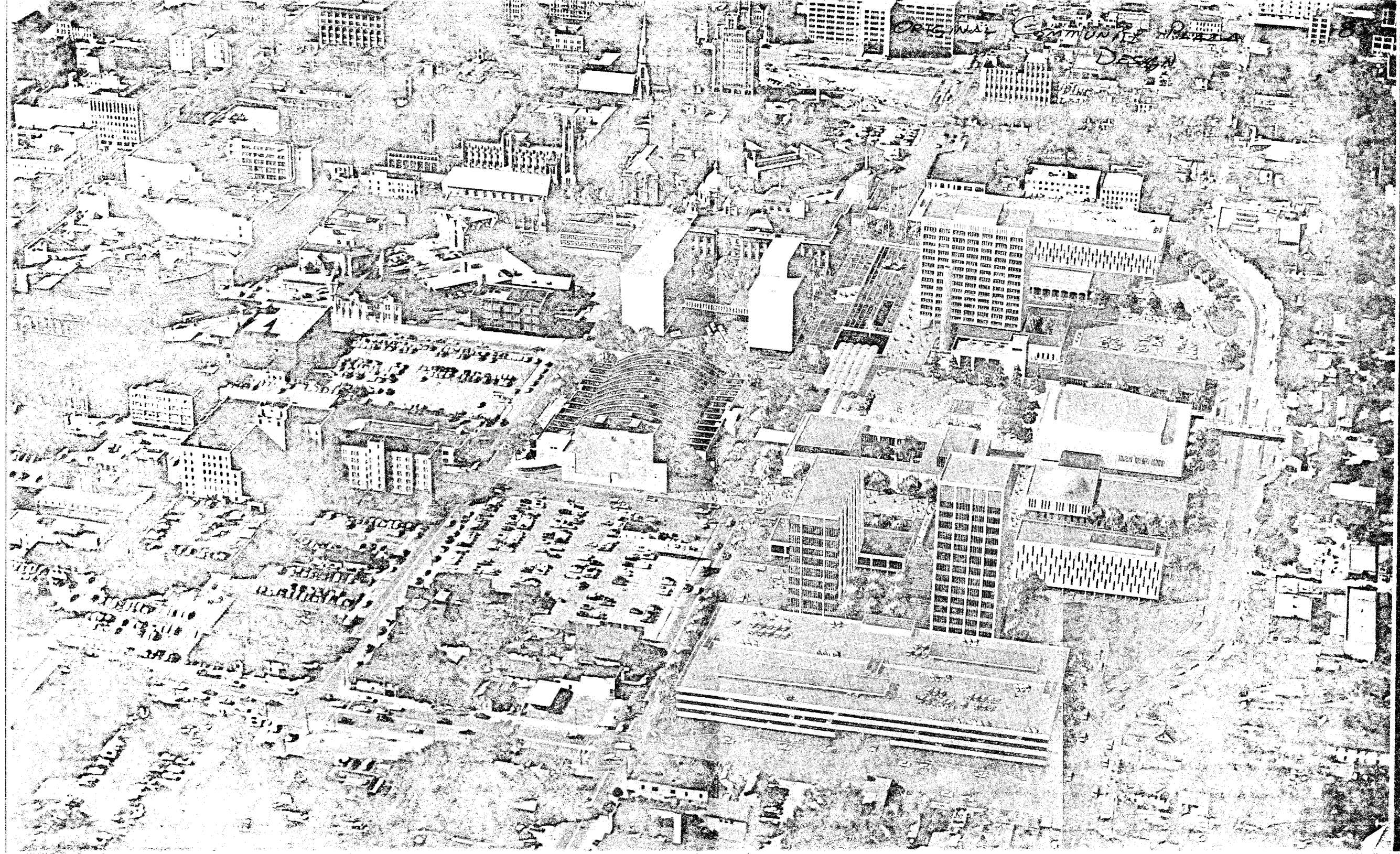
Basic studies of the Community Plaza area were conducted by a planning team, in this case that of coordinating architects, Ketcham-Miller-Arnold & Gordon P. Schopfer AIA. Then possible uses were developed for the Plaza in accord with land uses established by the Urban Renewal Agency. In this case the 14-acre site that the Plaza was to occupy was designated by Urban Renewal to be used as a community plaza. The plans that were developed, even though they were done so with a great deal of detail, were not to be taken as final. Indeed this has been the case for today

⁷⁵Ibid.

this 14-acre site hardly resembles the Community Plaza envisioned by the architects. However, the original study for the Plaza tried to exert some control over what was to finally develop. The controls that were made were in terms of design. The following guidelines were an attempt to force all future designs to fit into the original overall architectural concept of the Community Plaza:

1. Building lines may not project into Plaza space beyond those indicated on the Plaza Control Site Plan.
2. Height of all buildings and each element thereof are to meet those designated on the Plaza Control Drawings.
3. The location and extent of building space at Plaza level which may be enclosed by solid walls as well as space to be enclosed by transparent glass walls are designated.
4. Landscape elements (i.e.: paving materials, trees, water, flags, light standards, benches, etc.) are designated in Plaza Control Site Plans.
5. Requests to modify these requirements are to be submitted for consideration and action to the Coordinating Architects and Design Consultants.
6. All materials and construction methods used in the Plaza are to be of high quality and durability. All preliminary plans and working drawings for construction within the area designated as Community Plaza are to be submitted to the Coordinating Architects and Design Consultants for consideration and action before construction may be undertaken. The Coordinating Architects shall be responsible for the choice of building materials, fenestration and all elements affecting the Plaza area appearance in accordance⁷⁶ with the intent of the Community Plaza Plan.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 57.



In the original plans a staging schedule was given. It was to consist of three stages to be extended over a period of ten years. Among the major developments to be accomplished in Stage I--1960-1963, were the construction of the Public Safety Building, North Parking Garage, Ever-son Fine Arts Center, and Pavilion. During Stage II--1963-1966, a new City Hall, South Parking Garage, and new County Office Building were to be constructed. Finally in Stage III--1966-1970, the Music Hall, Industrial Museum, Natural and Human History Center, and a new Public Library were to be constructed. This last stage also called for the completion of mall areas.

In 1964, four years after this first design study for Community Plaza had been presented a second study was produced. Entitled Preliminary Design Information Mall and Open Space System (Common Usage Areas), this report also by Ketcham-Miller-Arnold & Gordon P. Schopfer, AIA, but this time with Russell Duryea Associates, consulting landscape architects, was more concerned with the mall, open areas, and services (garages, etc.), than with the individual buildings themselves. However, the report reflects some of the changes in the Community Plaza design that occurred in the lapse of four years.

One development which changed the plans of the Plaza somewhat was the Everson Museum of Fine Arts. Prior to 1960

the plans for the museum had not been decided upon. Now, with the plans definite, the planners had to alter slightly the plans for the plaza surrounding it. Since the museum was to be a prominent sculptured mass, the planners felt that the space adjacent to it "must be kept as simple and natural as possible to provide the proper setting for this structure designed as a work of art."⁷⁷

In the 1960 proposal separate service areas at grade were to be provided for the buildings at the south end of the Plaza. There was concern expressed afterwards over the adverse effect all these individual areas would have on pedestrian use and of the attractiveness of these spaces. Because of this it was decided that underground parking as well as servicing would be a better solution. The result today is the South Parking Garage located under the reflecting pool adjacent to the museum. This underground area permits close parking (very few spaces, however) for either the Everson Museum or the Public Safety Building as well as service access. From below, the buildings may be entered or serviced without coming above ground.

The uses of the Pavilion were clarified in this report. It was now to be a major attraction of the area,

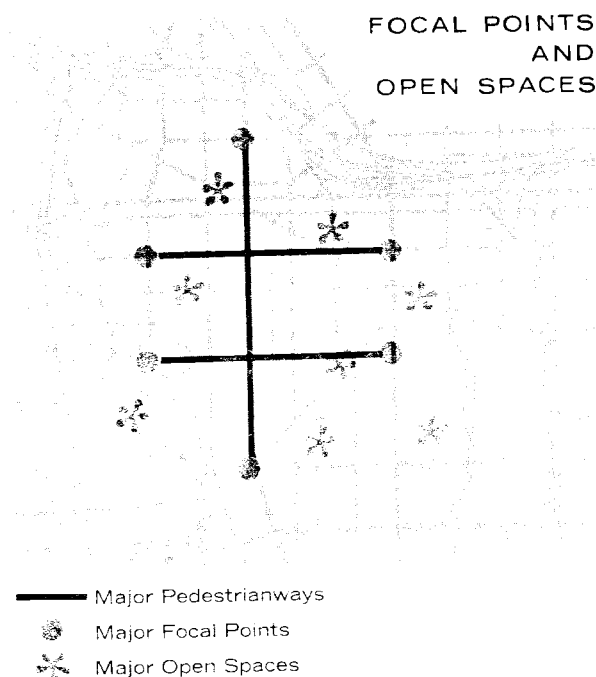
⁷⁷ Preliminary Design Information Mall and Open Space System (Common Usage Area) The Community Plaza, City of Syracuse, County of Onondaga, 1964, p. II-2.

serving as a restaurant with indoor and outdoor dining, a coffee shop, newspaper and tobacco stand, and a place to stage special events such as a fashion show.

Perhaps the biggest change was the City Hall. The plans were drawn up by Paul Rudolph and were completely different from what was first pictured in a sketch in the 1960 report. Whereas before there was envisioned a box-like structure with a north-south orientation of the adjacent open space, now there was a horseshoe shape structure that gave an east-west orientation of space. (See picture on the following page.) There was to be a pool in the front courtyard and an entrance ramp. The new plans for City Hall would mean changes in the design of the mall space of the Plaza. More important than this, however, is the fact that these plans for City Hall would most likely call for a change in the way people thought of architecture. It obviously was not meant to be simply considered another new building that would go up without much notice. Rather it was something new that would have to be either accepted or rejected because it was totally different. The people of Syracuse had never been exposed to anything quite similar before. The outcome is perhaps obvious for today there is not a new City Hall, let alone the one proposed by Paul Rudolph. Apparently the design was too much for the city fathers and Common Council to accept. The design was not

FOCAL POINTS AND OPEN SPACES

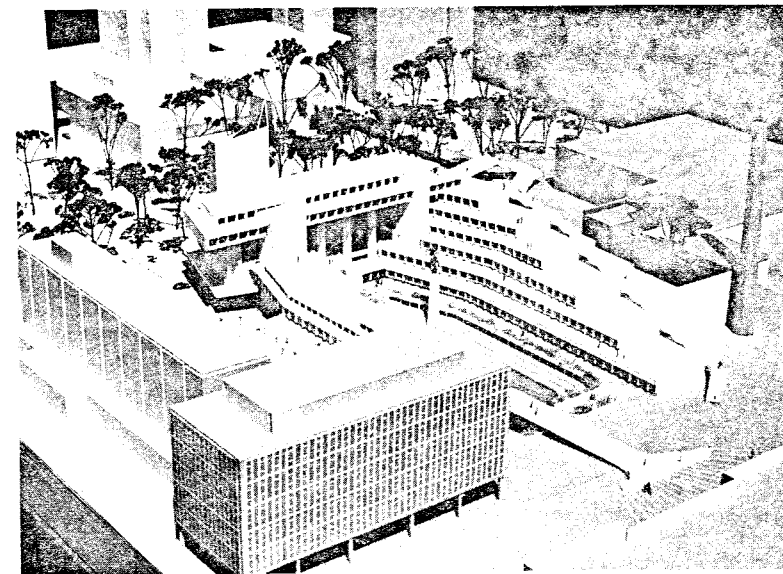
PRINCIPLE: *A series of strategically located focal points and open spaces should be developed which will provide a basis for the siting and orientation of buildings and will add to the interest and excitement of pedestrian activity within the area.*



These features are of two types: (1) open spaces, creating a sense of enclosure around which buildings are clustered; and (2) structures, to which lines of sight may be established or protected. The arrangement of focal points and open spaces should arouse the interest and curiosity of the pedestrian, and should provide a sense of orientation and a place of spontaneous congregation. Because they are unique in Central Syracuse, they will contribute substantially to the distinctive character of the area, setting it apart from other cities.

OBJECTIVES

1. A series of major and minor focal points should be developed in Central Syracuse; major focal points should be located along, or at the terminus of, important streets and pedestrianways; minor focal points may be located throughout the area.
2. Focal points should be located so that they become landmarks or points of reference and should be symbolic of the area or district in which they occur, e.g., a dignified open space or building in the government district, a historic building at Clinton Square, tower buildings or small relaxing open spaces in the retail and office districts, and gay informal settings in the entertainment area. Examples of existing focal points are the State Tower Building, Syracuse Savings Bank, Onondaga County Court House, St. Mary's Church, Chimes Building, Public Safety Building, Hotel Syracuse, National Guard Armory, etc.



Proposed Syracuse City Hall
RUDOLPH DESIGN

3. Views or glimpses of focal points from various locations in Central Syracuse should be protected by the control of signs, especially projecting overhead signs, and building setbacks or height restrictions; and should be enhanced by effective use of landscaping, pavement texture, and accent lighting.
4. Compact groups of buildings should focus on *open spaces* such as Salina Street (a linear open space), Clinton Square, Columbus Circle, Fayette Park, and MONY Plaza; additional groupings should be created.
5. The Onondaga Creek area should be developed as a major open space and aesthetic asset of Central Syracuse rather than discarded as an undesirable liability.

given favorable coverage by the local press. There was opposition and controversy which ended with the rejection of the plans.⁷⁸ Today the site where it was to be built still is vacant, being used as a parking lot.

The 1960 plans called for a Music Hall, Industrial Museum, and a Natural and Human History Center. Each facility was to have its own building. The 1964 report does not really call for changes with respect to these. It does state that the Music Hall would be the next cultural structure built (after the Everson) in the Community Plaza. It proposes, however, that the future sites of the Industrial Museum and Natural and Human History Center be labeled merely as Museum sites. Further stated in the report, "This change does not affect the basic acreage provided for cultural facilities but more truly represents the community's future cultural facility needs in the Plaza."⁷⁹ Even though it is stated that nothing really was changed, the feeling is generated that interest and support of these additional museums was dwindling. This seems to be the case for today there still is not an Industrial Museum

⁷⁸ See Post Standard, August 30, November 29, 1964; August 31, 1965; March 9, 1967, March 6, 1969: Herald American, February 12, March 12, June 25, 1967: Herald Journal, March 31, 1967; January 23, 1971.

⁷⁹ Preliminary Design Information, The Community Plaza, p. II-7.

nor a Natural and Human History Center. These sites are vacant, waiting to be developed. Condominium apartments are now being considered for these sites.

The Community Plaza, according to this report as well as the previous one, was proposed to be a major development in the Near East Side Project and in the City of Syracuse. The Plaza area was to serve "functions of 'ceremony', and 'performance'" with respect to community activities.⁸⁰ It was to provide opportunities for concerts, civic ceremonies, exhibits, dramatic performances, and dedications. It was to "serve as the informal meeting ground for much community life and activity."⁸¹ Lastly it was to be a "significant focus of community pride and achievement."⁸²

Community Plaza was not only to be a major development in terms of community activity, but also was meant to be a major instigator of future building development in the Near East Side and the central business district. Being a focal point in the plans of downtown redevelopment, Community Plaza spawned the building of Presidential Plaza for it enhanced the attractiveness for development of

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. IV-2.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., p. I-1.

adjacent sites. Referring to Presidential Plaza this report states:

The private sponsors (of Presidential Plaza) have indicated that the Community Plaza, and the attractive and convenient pedestrian ways and open spaces leading into the downtown core, were major factors in their determination of the feasibility of the contemplated development. Other adjacent development prospects and opportunities should also be favorably influenced by the Community Plaza Plan.⁸³

This proved to be the case. The plans for the Community Plaza seemed to spark interest in building downtown. Mutual of New York and the Carrier Corporation's decision to move to their present location downtown was probably influenced by the development activity proposed for the nearby Community Plaza. Even though they were swayed by being part of the Downtown One Urban Renewal Project, their decision to move was reinforced because the downtown area was being strengthened by the Plaza. Once a few developments had occurred it was somewhat of a "snowball" effect--the Plaza attracting MONY and Carrier who in turn because of their great number of employees that would now be downtown to support businesses attracted the building of Sibley's department store. Sibley's decision to locate a major department store downtown was almost unprecedented in recent years for the pattern has been that most businesses

⁸³ Ibid.

in other cities leave downtown and move to suburban shopping centers.⁸⁴ Sibley's new store sparked the exterior renovation and expansion of Dey Brothers' department store across the street from Sibley's. And so it continued. Recently, there have been plans and ideas for revitalizing and making downtown Syracuse an exciting and pleasant area.⁸⁵ It seemed then that the plans for Community Plaza were a major element in starting the process of revitalizing downtown Syracuse, one of the proposed goals.

CONCLUSION

It cannot be denied that the proposed Community Plaza did help to start the process of revitalizing downtown Syracuse. However, the extent to which this occurred did not meet up to what was proposed in the Community Plaza study. All the goals for rehabilitation of the central area have not been met. Most obviously "clearly defined and separated areas of pedestrian, vehicular, and service activities" have not been created. Likewise the "cultural, economic, and recreational functions of the central area of the community," have not been re-integrated. The Community Plaza

⁸⁴"Downtown Syracuse, New York," (Brochure).

⁸⁵SyracUSA, McAfee, Malo, Lebensold, Affleck, Nichol, Architects and Urban Planners.

of today certainly is not a "showcase of community progress." It cannot even really be considered a plaza. The Everson Museum, Public Safety Building, an unpaved parking lot, and parking garages, do not constitute a pleasant area where people would come, sit and relax while they are shopping (one of the stated objectives for the Plaza). Even though the Plaza was planned, it does not appear that way today. It looks very haphazard. The few buildings are not related to each other and the "Plaza" is not related and integrated with the rest of the community. There are no real ties with the central business district. The two have not been linked with pedestrian walkways and greenways. The atmosphere of festive activities exists only in the proposed plans.

Again as with other aspects of the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project, lack of planning coordination appears to be a problem of Community Plaza. It is difficult to say if there were a real need for a cultural civic center. Most likely it is opinion. One person decides that it would be good for the community and other people agree-- "Why not?," they say. The result is that much of the planning for Community Plaza--especially the cultural activities of it--were done without substantiation. It was almost as if the entire thing were fantasy. Why just one museum, why not two or three? And with all these people flocking to

this showcase we certainly need a pavilion restaurant. The planners really seemed to be dreaming. The Everson Museum is the only building that was financially backed and supported.

Lack of backing does not seem to be the entire answer to the cut-down version of Community Plaza. Even when support and interest in a building was generated, Urban Renewal appears to have been incapable of handling the situation. This is the case of the City Hall. Paul Rudolph's designs hit the city like a bombshell. It was a different design--different for the city and different than the design envisioned in the original plans of Community Plaza. The building was to have a different orientation than what was originally planned. Eyebrows were raised when people looked at the design. Urban Renewal did not know how to handle these two situations. Publicity of the Rudolph design was inefficiently handled, controversy arose, and finally the design was rejected. There was nothing to offer in its place. Today an unpaved parking area exists on the City Hall site. A library and parking garage are now being planned for this site.

A City-County Civic Center, taking the place of the cultural segment of the Community Plaza, is currently under construction in downtown Syracuse. (See Chapter VII.)

CHAPTER VI

RESIDENTIAL AREAS--PRESIDENTIAL PLAZA AND MULBERRY SQUARE

PRESIDENTIAL PLAZA

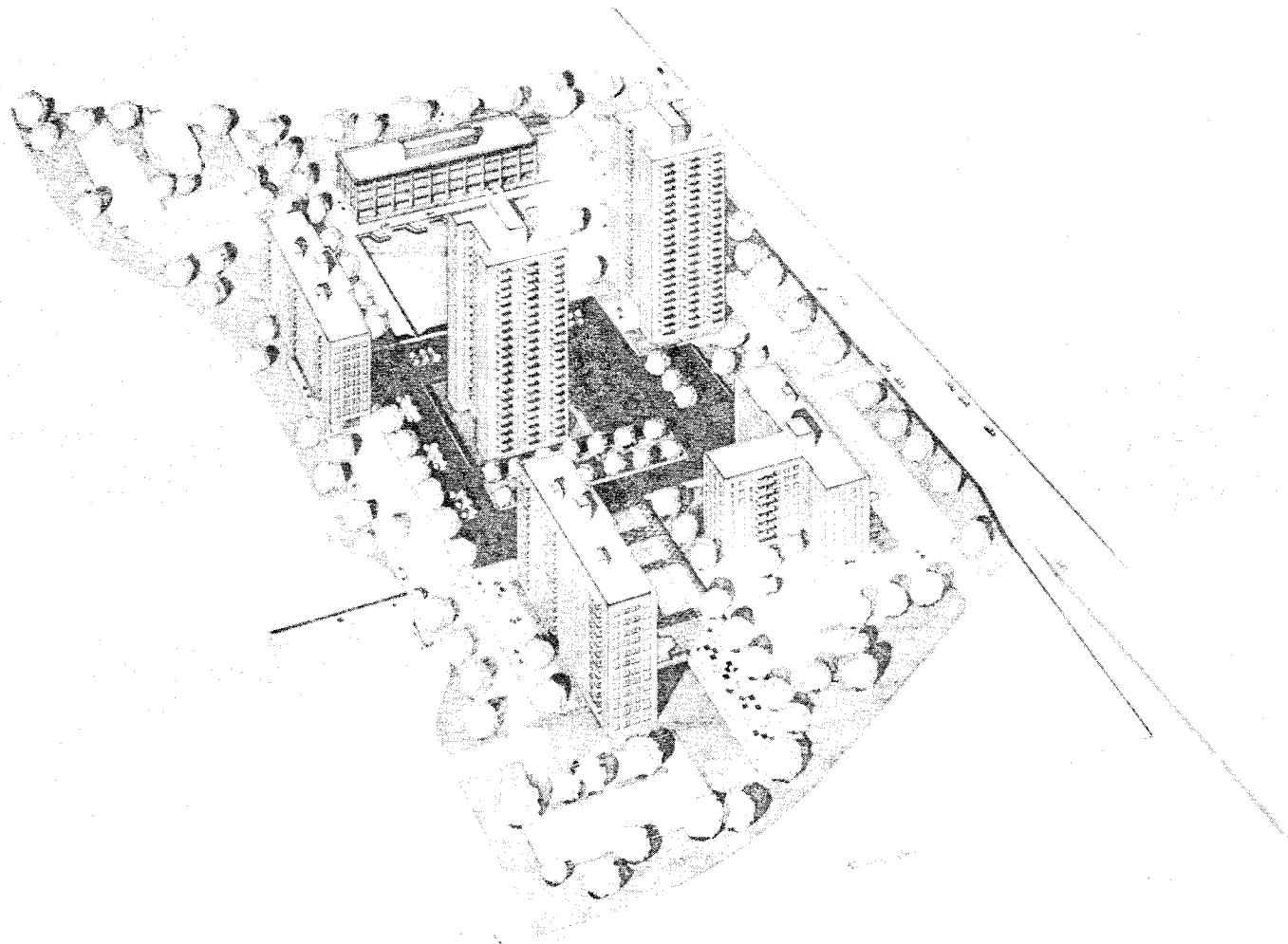
Sites 2, 2a, and 3, of the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project were to be redeveloped by Reynolds Aluminum Service Corporation of Washington, D.C., and Eagan Bros. Corporation of Syracuse. These sites were to be redeveloped for private uses; the redeveloper was chosen by an open competition. These sites were first offered on November 10, 1962. The Department of Urban Improvement sent notices regarding the availability of the sites to 50 prospective redevelopers. Newspaper advertisements were also used, appearing in the local Syracuse papers and the Wall Street Journal of New York. A predetermined price of \$1,222,000 was set for the 13.5 acres. In addition to the Reynolds-Eagan proposal, others were received from Robert Chuckrow, Dworman Associates, and the Sachar Development Corporation. (The Sachar proposal was later withdrawn.)

To evaluate the submitted proposals the Redevelopment Board of Review of Urban Renewal set up an Advisory Design Panel composed of the following: Michael Rapuano of Clark & Rapuano, N. Y. City; Dean Burnham Kelly, College

of Architecture, Cornell; Roger C. Williams, Hartford, Connecticut, Vice President of Travelers Inc. and President and General Manager of Constitution Plaza, Inc.; and Grady Clay, Louisville, Kentucky, editor of Landscape Architecture. This panel's job was to judge and evaluate the proposals in terms of architecture and site development. Each proposal's economic feasibility and practicability was also considered. The three proposals that were submitted were fairly similar. Each was composed of several 15-20 story high-rise apartment structures. In addition to the high-rise structures, one proposal had several lower apartment buildings and another had similar lower buildings and townhouse-type structures throughout the site. All proposals had provisions for commercial and office space.

The proposal submitted by Robert Chukrow of New York City was cited for its failure to handle on-site parking in an effective manner. The Panel stated that the first impression of this proposal was "a sea of automobiles."⁸⁶ The apartment buildings even though economical in design were thought to have very little in way of architectural distinction. These two points noted by the Advisory Design Panel seem to indicate the outward appearance of buildings and the project as a whole was one of the important

⁸⁶ Advisory Design Panel Report, p. 3.



A E R I A L P E R S P E C T I V E ©



A

CHUCKROY PROPOSAL



B

REYNOLDS - EAGAN PROPOSAL

factors in the evaluation. Also noted about this proposal was its failure to relate effectively to Community Plaza. As stated in the report, "The Townsend Street frontage is developed in a manner not keeping with its visual importance to Community Plaza. The proposed slab apartment buildings have a poor relationship with future buildings in Community Plaza."⁸⁷ The Panel also felt that this proposal offered too little commercial and office space.

The Reynolds-Eagan proposal received unanimous endorsement of the Advisory Design Panel for its design was "obviously well-thought out," it was competently executed, and it offered an outstanding variety of space and life.⁸⁸ What seemed to impress the Panel about this design was the sense of scale that it offered. With the mixture of townhouses amongst the high-rise buildings, a sense of human scale was achieved. The Panel felt that perhaps a better arrangement of structures could be achieved for it appeared cluttered. As in the Chukrow proposal evaluation, the Panel suggested that some of the buildings did not relate as well as they could to the Community Plaza. Also questioned were the site improvements for they seemed very expensive. This led to proposed rents which were high.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

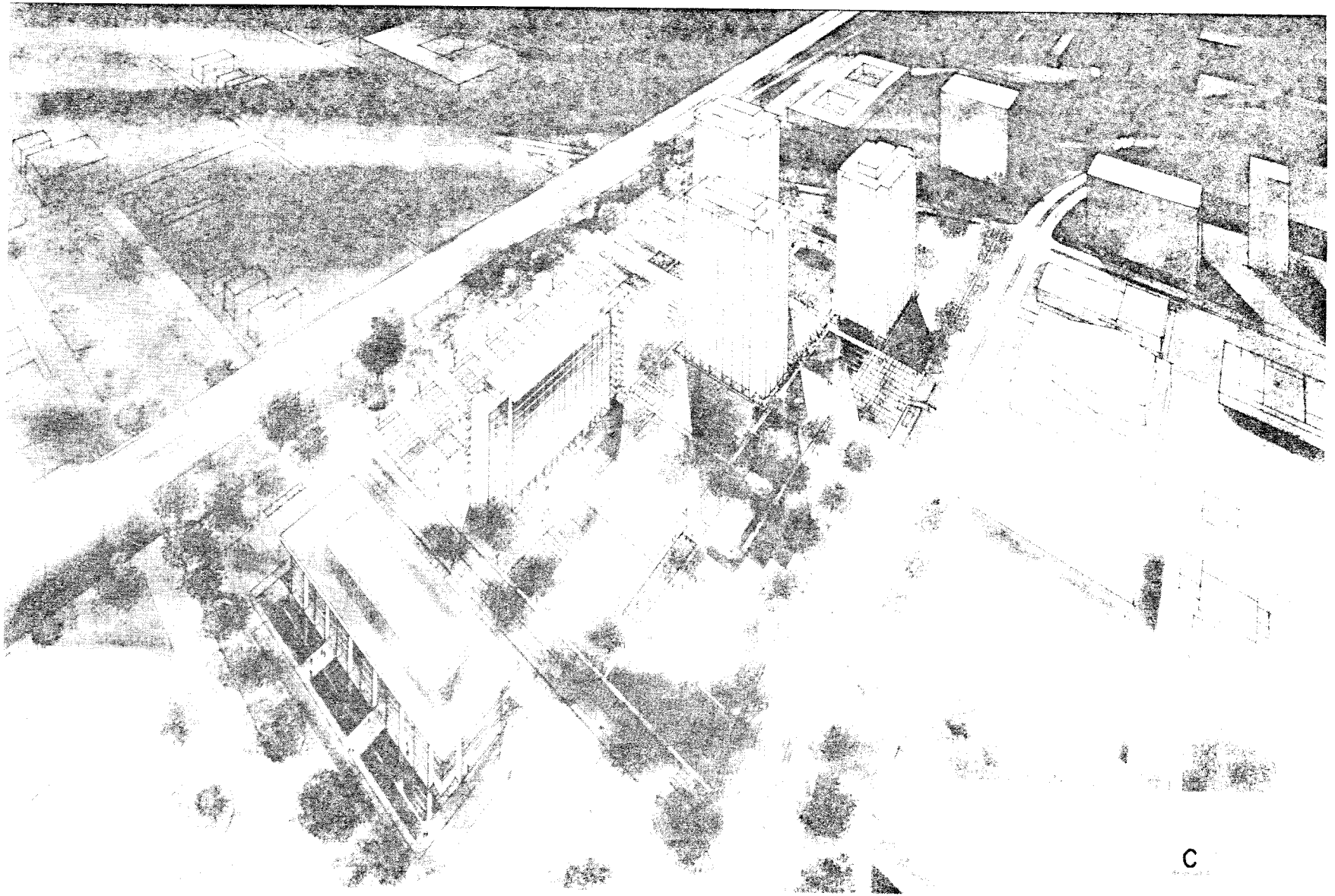
⁸⁸ Ibid., p, 4.

This brought an important question for the City to decide-- which was more favorable, extensive site improvements and high rents or lower rents and a lower quality of site improvements? A compromise was eventually reached with site improvements lowered somewhat in quality which led to lower rents. One of the site improvements that was noted as being expensive was a network of covered walkways. The Panel felt that perhaps this was overdesigned.

The last proposal, that of Dworman Associates of New York City, was also well received by the Panel. They felt that "This proposal appears to have the most clearly thought out and cleanly handled parking and vehicular circulation pattern of any plan studied."⁸⁹ Similar to the other two proposals, this one also had an area which did not effectively relate to the Community Plaza. In this case it was a large open space between an apartment building and the Plaza. Its relationship to the Plaza and the site as a whole was not clear. The Panel suggested that the position of this open space as well as some buildings in the proposal might be rearranged in order to strengthen the entire proposal.

In their report the Advisory Design Panel suggested, among other things, that more careful consideration be given

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 5.



DIVORMAN PROPOSAL

to the relationship between each proposal and the Community Plaza. The Community Plaza was the major development in the entire Near East Side Urban Renewal Project. It was around the Plaza that the uses for the other sites hinged. The Panel therefore felt that the proposals for Presidential Plaza should reflect this importance.

Even though the Reynolds-Eagan Proposal was chosen it underwent changes. Today Presidential Plaza appears as a cut-down version of the original plan. This is mainly due to the thinking (at that time) that there was going to be a bigger market for housing than there actually turned out to be. Despite the fact that Presidential Plaza is not as large as it was proposed to be, it fulfills the need of bringing housing close to the central business district--an important factor in revitalizing the central core of Syracuse. (Another high-rise residential tower is being planned today, however.)

MULBERRY SQUARE

Another competition for a different area of the Near East Side Project was that held for Site 10, 11, and 12. As opposed to the Presidential Plaza development, which was high density residential, the land use proposed by the Department of Urban Improvement (Urban Renewal) for Sites 10, 11, and 12, was medium density residential. According

to Section 302.2223 of the Near East Side Urban Renewal Plan, the uses permitted were one-, two-, three-, and four-family dwellings and apartment houses. The maximum land coverage was set at 30 per cent of the area of the site, the building height at three stories, and density at 30 dwelling units per acre. In addition it was stipulated that all yards were to be at least 20 feet in depth, there was to be at least 40 per cent (of the total area of the site) open space on each site, vehicular access from East Adams Street was not permitted, and there had to be provided a minimum of one parking space for each dwelling unit. It was with these restrictions that plans were to conform in order to be considered for evaluation. The winning proposal was to be "...a visually satisfying and well-conceived design...which provides a rewarding residential environment."⁹⁰

The proposal that was chosen seemed to cover quite thoroughly many areas. It took into account the city and neighborhood influences, something which is of utmost importance if the design is to be successfully integrated with its surroundings and well-received. This proposal study of 1965 (named Mulberry Square) states:

⁹⁰Mulberry Square, Renews 1965, p. 1.

These elements are not only physical in nature but social and economic as well; thus in planning a residential neighborhood for the central city the elements of density and land use must be acknowledged along with the physical features of existing street patterns, vehicular circulation, neighboring structures and the like.

The actual location of the Mulberry Square Project within the city created some obvious influences. Considered important by the designers was the heavy traffic on South Townsend Street, and the site's proximity to the central business district, Syracuse University, the medical center, and the Community Plaza. The neighborhood influences noted in the proposal were the elevated embankment where the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad line passes to the south of the sites, the presence of Pioneer Homes, one of the first public housing ventures in the country, the proposed commercial development to the west of the area, and a school area and playground also to the west. The influence of these is reflected somewhat in the design proposal. By the arrangement of structures a square was created in the center of the site. There was to be a major opening to this square directly opposite Pioneer Homes. It was felt that this arrangement would provide "a pleasing gateway looking across South Townsend Street to the existing development of Pioneer Homes."⁹² The playground

⁹¹Ibid., p. 2.

⁹²Ibid., p. 3.

bordering the Mulberry Square Site (along South State Street) resulted in an absence of dominant structures along this street--to allow easy entrance for children into the playground and also to better relate Mulberry Square with the playground.

These influential factors led to the development of certain design elements and concepts. The social objective of the design was to produce a "village-like atmosphere with a more human scale," as opposed to a large scale high-rise project which often leads to anonymity.⁹³ To achieve these goals, low-rise garden type apartment structures were used around the periphery of the project. On the interior of the project were to be individual row houses. These were to be grouped in clusters allowing for a variety of open spaces to be developed. The planners justified the less efficient land use coverage ration, using a density of 90 per cent of maximum allowed, by stating that the human scale of the project was achieved and also that a low-rise scheme allowed for lower construction costs than would a high-rise scheme.

Parking was a problem that was successfully handled. It is provided underneath peripheral structures of the project. The site was to be completely ringed by a service road.

⁹³Ibid., p. 4.

Separating the service road, and the rest of the project as well, from South Townsend Street, was to be an earth berm. The planners of Mulberry Square felt that this was one of the project's successes, stating that this solution to parking "results in one of the most pleasing and unique elements of design."⁹⁴ The berm was to be planted with sod on its slopes and shrubs and trees along its crest. For the interior parking, the structures were to be clustered so as to allow for small courts for tenant parking. This manner of handling parking avoided the common mass parking lot which can be very unsightly. Also the good vehicular circulation allowed for segregation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The most important design element according to the design team headed by Ferentino & Associates was the treatment of scale. Not only was it important in the project area itself, bringing it down to a human level, but it was also important in sense of scale of the city. The proposal in relation to the central core of the city and anything between that and Mulberry Square, was conceived on a gradual increasing or decreasing scale, depending upon how it was viewed. From a descending viewpoint the buildings of the downtown business area are the tallest, then come the

⁹⁴ Ibid.

buildings of Community and Presidential Plaza, and then the buildings of Mulberry Square, ranging from the exterior peripheral buildings (being the tallest) down to the inner clustered row houses. Because they had taken the question of scale and outside influences into consideration the planners felt it helped to achieve harmony and integration between the project and its surroundings, one of the goals which had been set.

Variety is emphasized in the housing types and sizes. The choice ranged from an efficiency unit, to one with four bedrooms. Within some types of units there is still further choice as to size and arrangement. For example the one bedroom type would have five different floor arrangements and sizes. Variety is also provided by two different types of units, with either the row house with its own garden patio or the standard apartment unit. Further variety is offered by location within the project area. Different unit types and sizes were spread throughout the project area in an attempt to achieve integration. However, the efficiency or studio type units were to be located exclusively in the central area. The reasoning behind this was that it was expected that the market for this type of unit would be mainly from the elderly or retired person living alone. For convenience then, these units were located in the center

of the project area. Also provided in these units were to be "certain features considered desirable for the elderly."⁹⁵

As much as possible interior corridors were avoided. It was hoped that by having numerous entrances each serving only a few tenants, a feeling of identification would be achieved and also would result in less maintenance.

Materials were to be chosen that would "achieve a harmony within the project itself and to relate other sections of the city as well."⁹⁶ For example, roofs were to be designed in places to take rough-hewn cedar shakes.

Variety and scale seem to be given the major emphasis in terms of design criteria. In summarizing their proposal, the designers stated it provides:

...a wide variety of tenant choice within the cost economics achieved by imaginative handling of a limited number of basic units. The scale of the design is such as to provide an individual identification with the dwelling unit and the result is more personal than that associated with a high rise development. The designers have achieved positive contribution to the urban environment without sacrificing the human qualities⁹⁷ of intimate scale and individual identification.

Mulberry Square of today is quite similar to the proposal. There have been few changes and the result is that

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 8.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁷Ibid.

it appears as a well thought out, coherent development. However, it does seem isolated from the rest of the Near East Side Project due to the fact that there are still sites that have not been redeveloped.

CONCLUSION

As a totally designed area, Presidential Plaza is not as successful as Mulberry Square. To begin with, Presidential Plaza cannot be said to be a plaza. It consists mainly of several high-rise towers set onto the site. The Reynolds-Eagan proposal may have offered an outstanding variety of spaces and life, but what was built certainly does not. There is almost no sense of human scale. In large part this is due to the fact that the low-rise residential structures were eliminated from the design. The area is very barren and almost hostile. There seems to be little to attract the apartment dweller from his high-rise home except to get into his car. There is little relationship with the Community Plaza. For one thing there is no real pedestrian link across the heavily traveled South Townsend Street, so the two sites are physically isolated. Secondly, there is almost nothing to visually relate to in Community Plaza. Perhaps though this can be taken as a fulfillment of goals for it can be said that Presidential Plaza reflects visual importance with Community Plaza-- nothing to nothing.

Mulberry Square is more successful in creating a more enjoyable living environment. The grouping of the low-rise structures creates a more human scale than Presidential Plaza. More activity can be found on the site-- children are playing, there are paths and more to attract people outside than Presidential Plaza, and there is more variety of spaces created. This is due mainly, however, to the planned characteristics of each. Presidential Plaza is not family designed. It was meant to be a luxury, high-rise development. Mulberry Square was designed as a development for low-income families.

One drawback that Mulberry Square seems to have is that the materials of construction appear to be cheap and repetitive. There is not enough quality and variation in outward physical appearance. It appears to be just another housing project. This brings to mind the possibility that in the near future, Mulberry Square might begin to deteriorate and could be termed a slum in 1985.

As with Presidential Plaza, Mulberry Square has difficulty relating with Community Plaza and the rest of the Near East Side Project. Vacant sites and heavily traveled streets make it an isolated neighborhood.

CHAPTER VII

BUILDINGS THAT NEVER MATERIALIZED

There were many buildings which were planned for the Near East Side Project, which never advanced beyond planning stages. The purpose of this chapter is to touch upon some of them--briefly, however, for if their development were thoroughly traced, this study would become much too involved and lengthy. What is hoped then is to create an awareness as to some of the complexity that goes into the planning of any Urban Renewal project. It is rare that an entire project is ever entirely developed as initially conceived.

One of the most interesting blocks in terms of proposals and outcome today is that adjacent to the Ever-son Museum--the block bounded by South Townsend Street, Harrison Street, South State Street, and East Adams Street. This block is composed of two urban renewal sites, 1a and 1b. At one time Bristol Laboratories were seriously considering moving downtown to this block. They were mainly contemplating an office building connected with a hotel having convention facilities and a parking garage. They were so seriously considering the move downtown that they hired Marcel Breuer to design a 3.5 million dollar high-rise

office building. This building was to be the key structure in the proposed 10 million dollar development.⁹⁸

According to Dick Hueber who was head of community relations and then project director for the Near East Side, the plans proceeded smoothly right through to completion and everything was set for construction. At the end of June, 1971, there was a marvelous groundbreaking celebration complete with speeches, priests, rabbis, and a filet mignon lunch at the Everson Museum.⁹⁹ Five days after this, on the eve of July 4, it was announced that the entire deal was off--the building was not to be built. The papers first said this was due to union labor construction problems. In a Herald Journal editorial of July 15, 1971, the problem was left to lie elsewhere. The reason seemed to be that on July 5 action had been taken to hike assessed valuations on every renewal project in Syracuse in the last 10 years. Within hours after these valuation boosts were revealed, Bristol Laboratories pulled out as a major tenant of the Near East Side Project.¹⁰⁰

For Site 1b there were also other proposals. Prior to the Bristol Laboratories' development plans, Eastern

⁹⁸ Herald Journal, November 6, 1968.

⁹⁹ Interview with Dick Hueber.

¹⁰⁰ Editorial, Herald Journal, July 15, 1971.

Greyhound Lines Inc. proposed to use this site for a Greyhound bus terminal-parking garage-motor hotel complex.¹⁰¹

With both of these proposals failing to develop, the land lay vacant. Again according to Dick Hueber, Marriott Inns wanted to construct a hamburger-type version of Valle's Steak House on this site.¹⁰² They thought that since the land was vacant why should they not be allowed to develop it--besides it was a good spot for them with plenty of land to accommodate a large parking lot. However, they were told no, that Urban Renewal wanted something that would be more permanent than a glorified hamburger restaurant.

Today after all these proposals, the land is still vacant, being used at present as a huge parking lot. The Urban Renewal Agency now says that Quality Inns is going to redevelop this site for a motel and parking garage.

At one time Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation was interested in constructing a sub-station on Sites 10 and 12. This was rejected by the Redevelopment Board of Review of Urban Renewal.¹⁰³ Today Mulberry Square apartments occupy these sites.

¹⁰¹ Redevelopment Board of Review Minutes, July 2, 1969.

¹⁰² Interview with Dick Hueber.

¹⁰³ Redevelopment Board of Review Minutes, April 13, 1964.

Site 1 which was reserved for the development of Community Plaza, obviously did not develop as it was originally envisioned. What is there is a cut-down version of the original plan. Within the Community Plaza plans have been numerous changes. One of the more controversial proposed buildings was, as mentioned before, the Rudolph design for City Hall. These plans were described by George McCulloch, former director of Urban Renewal, as being a combination of "football stadium and ice skating rink."¹⁰⁴

As evidenced today the City Hall was never built. Likewise some of the cultural facilities--Music Hall, Industrial Museum, and Human and Natural History Museum, were never constructed. As of today the vacant corner of the site that they were to occupy is being considered for condominium apartments. The concept of a cultural center has not been lost completely, however. Today a Civic Center is under construction adjacent to the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project fulfilling the original thought for the need of such a facility. The new Civic Center is a joint County-City venture. It will be directly adjacent to County Government buildings. These buildings will use the new Civic Center parking facilities by day, while by night the garage will be used for Civic Center purposes.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with George McCulloch.

These are just a few of the various development inputs that went into the Near East Side Project. The process of Urban Renewal is certainly not a simple one. Just for one site, many possible development plans are studied and reviewed by the Urban Renewal Agency before the final plan is approved.

CONCLUSION

Lack of planning organization and project administration can be attributed to the failure for some of these proposed buildings to materialize. The Bristol Laboratories' situation and the City Hall were both ridiculous. Perhaps if they had been handled differently with Urban Renewal having more awareness and control over the inputs that would affect proposed projects, they might have been carried out to completion.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CRP AND THE GNRP

The process of Urban Renewal in Syracuse, especially the Near East Side Project has been long and tedious. There were many "false starts" of the official program--programs started that did not deal specifically with the problem at hand--slum clearance. The Near East Side Project has been painful in many respects, but much has been learned from it. (However, the problem areas that were recognized as a result of the Near East Side were not given adequate treatment so as to avoid the same problem in the future.) Perhaps the greatest value in the Near East Side Project has not been the elimination of the "tenderloin" of slums. A great importance of the Near East Side Project has been the creation of new programs under Urban Renewal while the Near East Side Project was being executed (most likely a direct result of the Near East Side Project) which are attempts to redirect somewhat the process of urban renewal in Syracuse.

CRP

One program that was started was the Community Renewal Program (CRP), established by a 1959 amendment to the Housing Act of 1949. The purpose behind the creation of this program was to allow plans to be developed on a city-wide

basis rather than an isolated project-by-project basis.

This change was believed to allow for the development of plans that would better serve the community as a whole.

This CRP enabled long-range plans for renewal activity to be developed which is advantageous because it should lead to a more coherent end result with various projects started at different times having some relationship among them.

The CRP that was started in Syracuse treats areas with one of the following methods: (1) code enforcement to help conserve sound areas; (2) rehabilitation of structures worth saving; or (3) complete clearance of areas beyond saving.

The program has the following objectives:

1. Identification of blighted and substandard housing and environmental conditions throughout the city;
2. analysis of the factors that create blighted and substandard conditions;
3. designation as renewal areas, those sections of the city where blight is located or threatens to be a problem in the future;
4. determination of the various types of remedial treatment that will be required to improve the renewal areas, based upon the proposals of the Master Plan of Land Uses, the degree of blight, and the potential and capacity of the various neighborhoods themselves for taking the necessary action required for improvement;
5. evaluation of the magnitude of the job to be done in terms of the city's existing and anticipated financial and relocation resources;
6. development of a long-range 15-year program of urban renewal activity, based upon urgency of need, the marketability of project land and the city's social, economic and political resources;

7. recommendations of various means to effectuate the program on a continuing basis and to make it a permanent function of local government.¹⁰⁵

The program is a very broad one for it covers all of the City of Syracuse. In more detail were study analyses of various areas of the City--examining some of the distinct characteristics and problems of each and suggesting "Recommended Renewal Activity" for each. Besides providing a variety of renewal activities, all aimed at eliminating and preventing blight in Syracuse, the program's importance also lies in the fact that it "has been staged to permit the City to engage in progressively more intensive projects as it gains the experience, financial capacity, and relocation resources to enable it to do so."¹⁰⁶

GNRP

As Syracuse became more aware of the problems and difficulties that urban renewal involves (as a result of the Near East Side Project), another attempt was made to coordinate and establish relationships among renewal activities. This attempt was the General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (GNRP). While the Community Renewal Program dealt with the entire City of Syracuse, the GNRP directed its efforts

¹⁰⁵ Community Renewal Program, p. viii.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

at Central Syracuse. This was an area where most of Syracuse's renewal activity was to take place.

Aimed at revitalizing Central Syracuse, the program stated four basic policies. The first was that Central Syracuse be planned as an intensely-developed compact district. This goal was directed at the governmental, administrative, commercial, and retail establishments that benefit from being located in the central business district. The second considered the planning needs of related activities--essential businesses, centers of education, worship. The third stated that "Central Syracuse should be easily accessible from every neighborhood and industrial area of the city and from all parts of the state and nation."¹⁰⁷ The last policy stated was that "Central Syracuse be exciting by day and by night and be a place of beauty and pleasant surroundings."¹⁰⁸

Broadly the GNRP gives four areas of action to be taken if these basic policies of the program are to be successfully carried out. These as stated are:

First, major public improvements will be necessary...

Second, the Central Syracuse program will require continuing emphasis on urban renewal...

¹⁰⁷ Central Syracuse, A General Neighborhood Renewal Plan, Part I, Development Policies and Objectives, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Third, the city must bring to bear its fullest efforts to use its regulatory powers (code enforcement, zoning ordinances) to the extent necessary to protect and enhance Central Syracuse.

Fourth, business leadership must make the major contribution to the ultimate full development of Central Syracuse.¹⁰⁹

The plans for the achievement of these "lofty" policies as presented in the GNRP are not very clear. Rather they suggest incorporation of planned urban renewal activities, such as the already-in-progress Near East Side and the Downtown One Urban Renewal Projects, and new developments and improvements such as the modernization of Salina Street and the changing of Clinton Square and Onondaga Creek area. As a basis to insure that these plans are to be carried out in accordance with the policies of the GNRP, land use and zoning restrictions and a circulation and parking plan are presented.

CONCLUSION

The recognition of some of the problems encountered in the Near East Side Project are evidenced in the CRP and the GNRP. Marketability of project land, housing resources for relocation purposes, and the revitalization of the central area are some of the considerations stated that should

¹⁰⁹Ibid. p. 7.

be emphasized and investigated further in future renewal activity. However, it requires much more than just stating a problem in order to deal with it effectively. What the CRP and the GNRP both do is to state basic, obvious considerations recommending that they should be studied in renewal activity of the future. These basic points were not considered thoroughly enough in the Near East Side Project. What the CRP and the GNRP fail to do is to present an effective plan of implementation as to how to go about considering these basic points. This appears hauntingly similar to the General Plan of 1958 where basic, obvious considerations with respect to the Near East Side were presented, but no method of implementation was suggested. In the end these basic points were ignored and the Project developments seemed to run their own course without any control and coordination.

The CRP and the GNRP will most likely run in the same manner as the General Plan. They will have little effect on future renewal activities. Recognition of problems is a positive gain from the Near East Side Project. However, this is only the first step in eliminating and preventing them.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY

Out of all the developments in the Near East Side Project it appears that Urban Renewal was not capable of efficiently handling such a large project. The situation was even further aggravated when the fact is considered that Syracuse had little experience with handling renewal projects. Some of the results of this have already been pointed out--the proposed City Hall and cut-down Community Plaza, Presidential Plaza (also cut-down), the plans for Bristol Laboratories, and the overall isolated sites within the Project. There is little integration with the rest of the community, especially the central business district which was supposed to be closely tied to Community Plaza and the rest of the Project.

Urban Renewal knew it was encountering problems, but did not know how to handle them. The Community Renewal Program and the General Neighborhood Renewal Program were attempts to alleviate some of these problems. Because the problems and objectives are just restated and suggested, and treatment of them is so vague and never clearly stated, both the CRP and the GNRP will ultimately prove to be useless. One way to learn how to handle efficiently and effectively urban renewal and the problems it involves is

through many years of experience which is what Syracuse seems to be doing. This is unfortunate for this can be a very expensive and painful method.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

"A decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family" part of the goals set nationally in the Housing Act of 1949 can be stated as reasons behind the need for the Urban Renewal Program. As the Program developed there seemed to be two real goals that were probably used as the basis for every renewal project in the country. The first which is really a social goal is directed back to the "suitable living environment for every American family." This goal can be stated as being the improvement of physical housing units as well as the existing surrounding conditions which can lead to decay. The second goal, an economic one, is the revitalization of areas which strengthen property values and improve the tax structure of the area. Of course both goals in order to be achieved seem to demand the same actions, that is, the elimination of blighted areas. It is with these basic goals that Syracuse looked into its problem of renewal specifically with regard to the Near East Side Project.

No longer is the Near East Side Project in the public spotlight as it once was during acquisition, clearance, and early development. Thus it is very infrequent that the

Project area draws any attention. Today it seems that it is merely accepted and no longer questioned at all. What was there before is for the most part forgotten. Even people passing through the area will seldom stop and think of the former residents and buildings of the "tenderloin" of slums. A new building in the Project might attract a passer-by's attention merely because it is a new building. The implications that the development of the actual building involved no longer seem to matter. Many people in fact are unaware that the area is an Urban Renewal project--that there was a great deal of planning done before the end results appeared.

However, even though in many respects the Near East Side Project fails to draw attention today, it is still important. Its influence can be viewed basically in two ways. The first and most obvious is the physical effect it has had on the area itself and on surrounding neighborhoods and the city. The second influence is a more subtle one, but just as important if not even more so than the first. This is the effect it has had on planning and redevelopment not only with respect to urban renewal, but to all aspects of development and redevelopment in the City of Syracuse.

There is no denying that the Near East Side Project eliminated slums and blighted areas. What was there prior to Urban Renewal was described by many people as being really

deplorable. It seemed to be agreed by all that the area was definitely a slum. This was the real basis for deciding upon the Near East Side as a renewal area. Something had to be done with it and something was. Today there is no physical trace left of the old neighborhood except for the County Steam Plant. This is the price to be paid in a total clearance project. What is there in its place is new and physically is an improvement--it certainly is not a slum.

The Near East Side Project in this respect seems to be successful. However, the impact it has had on surrounding areas cannot be classified as being beneficial. One of its biggest problems seems to lie in the relocation of residents. Urban Renewal had to provide housing units for all residents displaced from the Near East Side. What choices were offered the residents were in many cases refused. The reason for this is that the housing offered to the residents frequently was undesirable for any number of reasons. The most common reason was location--people did not want to move far from the Near East Side. It would be inconvenient for traveling to their jobs and people did not want to be removed from their neighbors and friends. This resulted in a migration to the area southwest of the Near East Side which compounded an existing problem. The southwest area was also blighted, but it certainly was not as

bad as the Near East Side. According to Mike Passerella of the Urban Renewal Agency, the effect that the relocation and urban renewal of the Near East Side had on peripheral areas (southwest area) was not at all desirable.¹¹⁰ What happened is that with people moving into the southwest area it led to a situation of overcrowding of an already crowded area. This meant that an area that was already starting to deteriorate would only do so faster. Today Urban Renewal is involved in the southwest area. However, the area is being treated differently than the Near East Side had been. Instead of total clearance or even clearance of a block, five or six deteriorating units are taken down. In their place new housing units are built or vest-pocket parks are created. This shift in treatment is partially due to the fact that some of the structures in the area are not in as bad condition as all of those were in the Near East Side. Thus they are worth saving. Also though, the shift is due to the lesson learned from the Near East Side total clearance Project. The bulldozer effect of total clearance, although clearing up the problem on the site itself, merely seems to push it elsewhere--in this case it was to the southwest area.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Mike Passerella.

The question arises as to whether this problem was due to the speed in which the area was cleared. It appears that little planning and studying was actually conducted before the Near East Side became slated for total clearance. Everyone involved knew that the area was the worst in the City. It needed urban renewal and intuitively people felt that the only way to handle it would be with total clearance. It seems then that it was almost an after-the-fact decision--that is the Near East Side through surveys and other information gathered for the Project Eligibility and Relocation Report was "officially" found to be deteriorating and substandard and deemed for total clearance after everyone had decided this for themselves. What this report did was reinforce suspicions and feelings.

The planning of the Near East Side Project does not seem to have been given enough time prior to clearance. Today there are still sites lying vacant, waiting to be redeveloped. The availability of land for disposition to redevelopers was to be in June, 1966.¹¹¹ Today it is almost eight years later and land is still available. Perhaps this is evidence that better planning and coordination was needed before the Near East Side was cleared.

¹¹¹Near East Side Urban Renewal Plan, p. 37.

This problem of land lying vacant is even further aggravated by the Urban Renewal Agency which is responsible for its interim treatment. Cleared land is not being properly treated today. Blocks that are parking lots are not paved, weeds are growing up, and litter can be found. The area looks shabby. This is not a recent problem. In 1963 this problem was brought to the attention of the Agency by George McCulloch, director at that time.¹¹² Today Mr. McCulloch still feels this is a problem.¹¹³ He feels that part of the difficulty has been the shifting of the spotlight from the Near East Side Project to the more recent Downtown One Project. It appears that the City was not capable of handling another major Urban Renewal project so soon after the Near East Side. Urban Renewal overextended itself and thus has not been capable of efficiently handling everything undertaken--as evidenced by the inefficient interim treatment.

As a result of the Near East Side Project much has been learned about the handling of an Urban Renewal project. The Near East Side was the first major undertaking by Urban Renewal in Syracuse. Since 1958 when the Project first began,

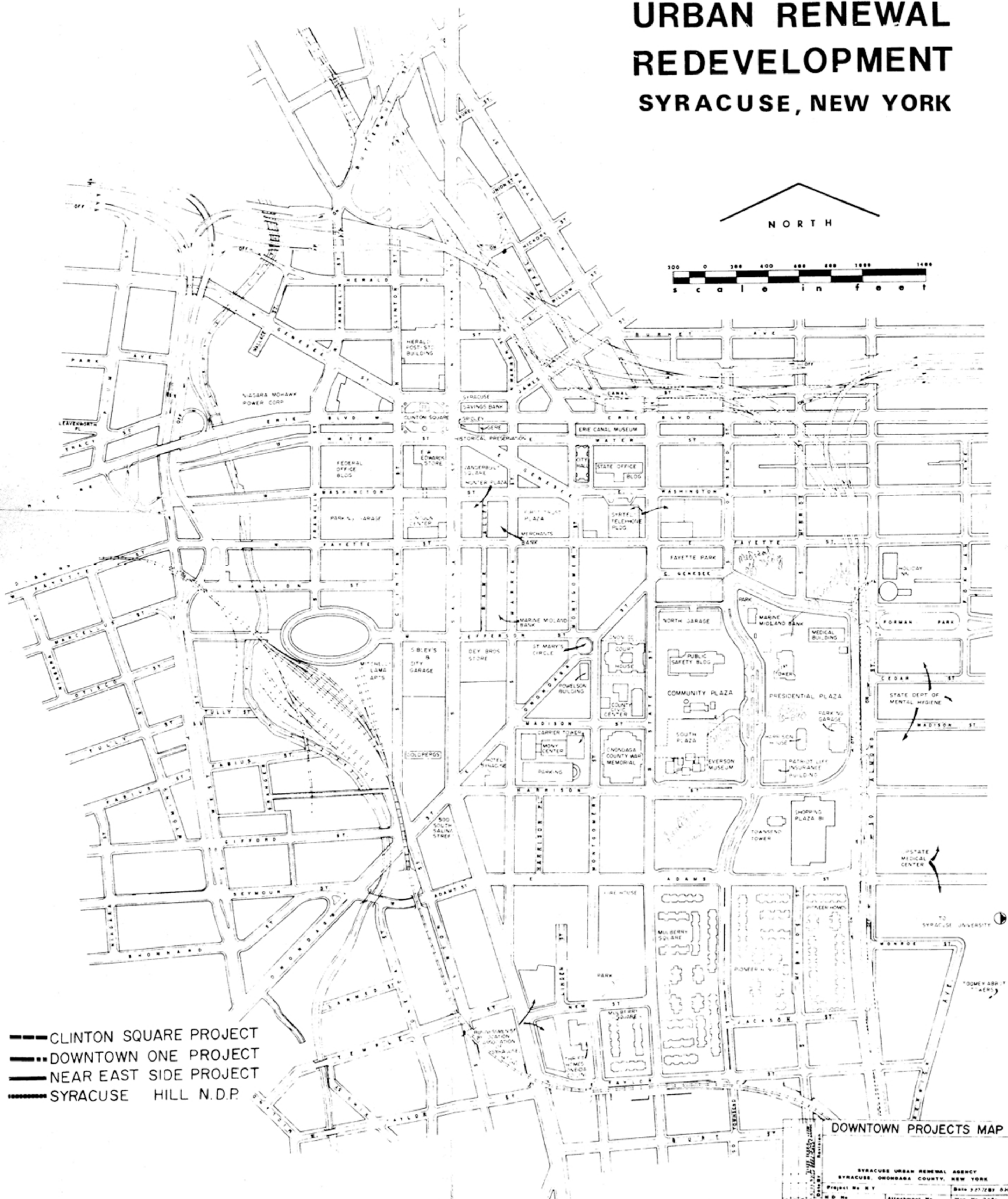
¹¹² Redevelopment Board of Review Minutes, August 7, 1963, p. 2.

¹¹³ Interview with George McCulloch.

others have been undertaken--the Southwest Area, the Syracuse Hill Project, and Downtown One. (See map on the following page.) All projects since the Near East Side have benefited from it. Trouble spots such as that of relocation can now be anticipated (but most likely not properly treated).

While the Near East Side Project was being executed two basic planning aids were established by the Federal Government. These were the CRP--Community Renewal Program (a long-range urban renewal program to be coordinated with all other renewal related local programs) and the GNRP--General Neighborhood Renewal Program (covering a larger area where more than one project is to be staged in a period of not over ten years.) It seems that as a result of various communities undertaking their first Urban Renewal projects the Government sensed a common path of troubles and thus created the CRP and the GNRP which allow for greater coordination of individual projects. Syracuse adopted both programs--the CRP in 1964 and the GNRP for Central Syracuse in 1964-1965. As stated previously the CRP in Syracuse was broad, covering the entire city and providing for the development of long-range plans which would lead to a more coherent end result with various projects started at different times having some relationship among them. The GNRP was broadly aimed at the redevelopment of Central Syracuse.

URBAN RENEWAL REDEVELOPMENT SYRACUSE, NEW YORK



- CLINTON SQUARE PROJECT
- DOWNTOWN ONE PROJECT
- NEAR EAST SIDE PROJECT
- SYRACUSE HILL N.D.P.

DOWNTOWN PROJECTS MAP

It was to provide the framework into which projects of the area would fit and like the CRP was to lead to a coherent end result, in this case the revitalization of the Central Area of the City.

These two programs were to allow for better development of plans relating to Urban Renewal. In the case of Syracuse, this was definitely needed. The Near East Side Project although beneficial in some aspects, on the whole seemed to be very disjointed with little coordination. In addition to the CRP and the GNRP, the General Plan of the City of Syracuse also helped to bring some coherence to the practice of Urban Renewal. It provided an additional set of restrictions to which projects had to conform, although the effectiveness of these restrictions in improving the process of urban renewal is questionable. Perhaps, though, these programs, especially the CRP and the GNRP, arrived too late to really aid the Near East Side Project. Today it is difficult to obtain information--studies, plans, analyses--on the Project. In fact the original Survey and Planning Application and the Grant Application were not able to be obtained. (See Appendix E.) Much of the information on the Near East Side Project must be found today through hearsay--talking with people who were involved to find out what went on. This is due to the fact that this information goes back over 15 years and is not kept on file that

long. (Documented information on more recent projects can be easily located.) However, length of time is not the complete answer. Urban Renewal projects over the years have become more complex. They must conform to general plans, CRP's, GNRP's, etc. People are becoming increasingly aware of how Urban Renewal works and it is common today to find people manipulating the system and using Urban Renewal for their own gains, whether politically or financially. People also are becoming more critical of the Program. Community groups have been organized to fight back against Urban Renewal. They do not want Renewal in their neighborhood--they are satisfied with their present homes and neighbors and do not want to be forced out. They have seen other groups successfully organize and fight to prevent the onslaught of Urban Renewal and are determined to do the same.¹¹⁴ Because of all of this Urban Renewal programs must be better documented and justified. The local public agency must be sure as to what it is doing. This situation is recognized by the Federal Government itself by acknowledging the fact that the participating locality has to "observe over 1800 pages of Federal regulations in carrying out its project" and directs its time toward "staying within--or getting around--this maze of regulations rather than

¹¹⁴See Clarence J. Davies, Neighborhood Groups and Urban Renewal (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).

toward solving basic community problems."¹¹⁵

The Urban Renewal Program as evidenced with the Near East Side Project in Syracuse, has come a long way from the original "decent home for every family" of the Housing Act of 1949. On its way it has brought success (which as in the case of the Near East Side is difficult to assess) and failure. Since 1949 much has been learned about Urban Renewal, not only in Syracuse, but in all communities in the country and as a result there have been many attempts at redirecting the Program. The results of the Near East Side Project in Syracuse do not meet the proposed objectives, goals, and promises. The elimination of blight has not been achieved. Rather it has merely shifted to other places. More blatant, perhaps, is the failure of Urban Renewal to meet its great promises of a better environment. Desirable neighborhoods have not been created; traffic has increased in the area and the pedestrian has been forgotten, making the original concept of a totally integrated project seem ludicrous today; there are no real plazas as names state (Plaza 81, Presidential Plaza, Community Plaza). Finally the most flagrant flaw has been the creation of a vast wasteland, where sense of human scale and even the user of the area and his activities have been ignored. Urban renewal will always be needed, but hopefully there will be more of the continuity and comprehensiveness needed to actually maintain the vitality of the urban setting.

¹¹⁵ Government Statement, "Urban Renewal."

APPENDIX A

DUTIES AND POWERS OF SYRACUSE'S DIRECTOR AND OFFICE OF URBAN RENEWAL

As stated in the charter amendment:

Article III The Mayor 65, DIRECTOR OF URBAN RENEWAL

The Mayor may appoint and at pleasure remove, a Director of Urban Renewal, and such other subordinates as may be prescribed by the Board of Estimate, for the purpose of studying, formulating, developing and supervising local slum clearance and urban renewal or rehabilitation projects in the city authorized by law, and coordinating the efforts of all departments and agencies of the city entrusted with or responsible for carrying out the city's local slum clearance and urban renewal or rehabilitation projects or the various functions or activities necessary or required in connection therewith. Such Director shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Mayor or by Ordinance of the Council. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to supersede any powers heretofore granted by this Charter to any of the officers, departments, boards, commissions, and other agencies of the city.

The general powers and duties of the Department of Urban Renewal set up in the city's charter amendment are as follows:

- (1) The development of a comprehensive urban renewal program for the city of Syracuse, delineating specific renewal projects within the general overall treatment area as defined by the department of planning. The comprehensive urban renewal program shall be in conformance with the general development plan for the city of Syracuse and its metropolitan area.
- (2) The preparation of specific programs of action for selected renewal projects.
- (3) The preparation of applications for federal and state funds for the undertaking of renewal projects.

- (4) The expenditure of renewal funds advanced by the federal or state government, any such expenditure being made in consultation with the management cabinet.
- (5) The preparation of the detailed planning for an approved project area as required by federal and state regulations relating thereto and as required by the comprehensive urban renewal program of the city of Syracuse.
- (6) The consummation of arrangements directed to the successful achievement of renewal with respect to demolition, and construction of public utilities and public improvements; and with respect thereto, the department shall consult with technical representatives of the major utilities and public service companies concerned to assure the most economic and advantageous results.
- (7) The relocation of families on privately as well as publicly cleared sites.
- (8) Arrangements with appropriate city agencies for legal assistance, appraisals, contract awards, and land acquisition.
- (9) Negotiations in connection with the disposition and conveyance of private property.
- (10) The management of, or arranging for the management of, property acquired pending conveyance.
- (11) The keeping of the mayor's capital budget committee fully informed of urban renewal requirements, and relating the renewal program to the financial status of the city.
- (12) Maintenance of close liaison with the enforcement functions of the city.
- (13) The general and specific responsibility for stimulating, undertaking, and sponsoring rehabilitation, conservation, and slum clearance activities.
- (14) Stimulation of and assistance with community and citizen participation in renewal on both a city-wide and project basis.

- (15) Such other duties and functions as requested by the mayor or the common council with respect to urban renewal.

Also stated in the charter are the duties of the Advisory Council:

- (1) To review the activities of the department of urban renewal by holding joint conferences at least once a month with the director thereof, and such other meetings as it desires with other department heads.
- (2) To transmit to the mayor at least once a month, a memorandum advising him of progress in urban renewal, and to submit annually a detailed report on its observations with respect to the department of urban renewal.
- (3) To recommend continuing organizational changes to the director and the mayor, with respect to internal department organization, as well as with respect to larger scale reorganization as it affects urban renewal.
- (4) To review renewal standards established by the department, action proposals, and staff directions; the conclusions of the advisory council being solely advisory.
- (5) To work with city-wide organizations and project area organizations in interpreting the city's urban renewal program, and convey back to the department of urban renewal the attitudes of these groups.

APPENDIX B

NEAR EAST SIDE--STREET AND SEWER IMPROVEMENTS

Following are the street and sewer improvements in
the Near East Side:

1. Construction of the East Jefferson Street trunk sewer.
2. Widening of McCarthy Avenue.

Project Expenditures

A. Street Improvements

1. Linden Street: Widen and reconstruct from project boundary to existing Jackson Street, and extend south to Taylor Street.
2. South State Street: Widen and reconstruct from 134 feet north of Jackson Street to East Taylor Street.
3. Harrison Street: Widen and reconstruct from South State Street to South McBride Street.
4. South Townsend Street: New construction from McCarthy Avenue to East Adams Street.
5. New street (replacing of Jackson Street): New construction from South State Street to Salina Street.
6. Harrison-Madison Connector: New construction from Harrison Street to Madison Street, including landscaping of triangular right-of-way.
7. East Taylor Street: Widen and reconstruct from South Salina Street to South Townsend Street.
8. Pedestrian Bridges: Across South Townsend Street and Harrison Street.

- B. Sewer System Improvements--General Street Sewers.
- C. Water System Improvements.
- D. Relocating of existing call boxes for fire and police communications systems.

Non-Cash Local Grants In Aid

- A. Street Improvements.
 - 1. McCarthy Avenue: Completion of widening and reconstruction.
 - 2. Madison Street: Widen and reconstruct from Interstate Expressway right-of-way to project boundary.
 - 3. South Townsend Street: Widen and reconstruct from East Adams Street to the south project boundary.
 - 4. Harrison Street: Reconstruct for trunk sewer replacement, from the west project boundary to a point 225 feet westerly. Also from the Interstate Expressway right-of-way to a point 40 feet east of the east project boundary.
- B. Sewer System Improvements.
 - 1. Jefferson Street Trunk Sewer: Realign and reconstruct from the east line of the Interstate Expressway right-of-way along East Jefferson Street to South Townsend Street, northerly to McCarthy Avenue, westerly to South State Street, and southerly to the existing line in East Jefferson Street.
 - 2. Harrison Street Trunk Sewer: Reconstruct along Harrison Street from 140 feet east of the eastern project boundary to 225 feet west of the west project boundary.

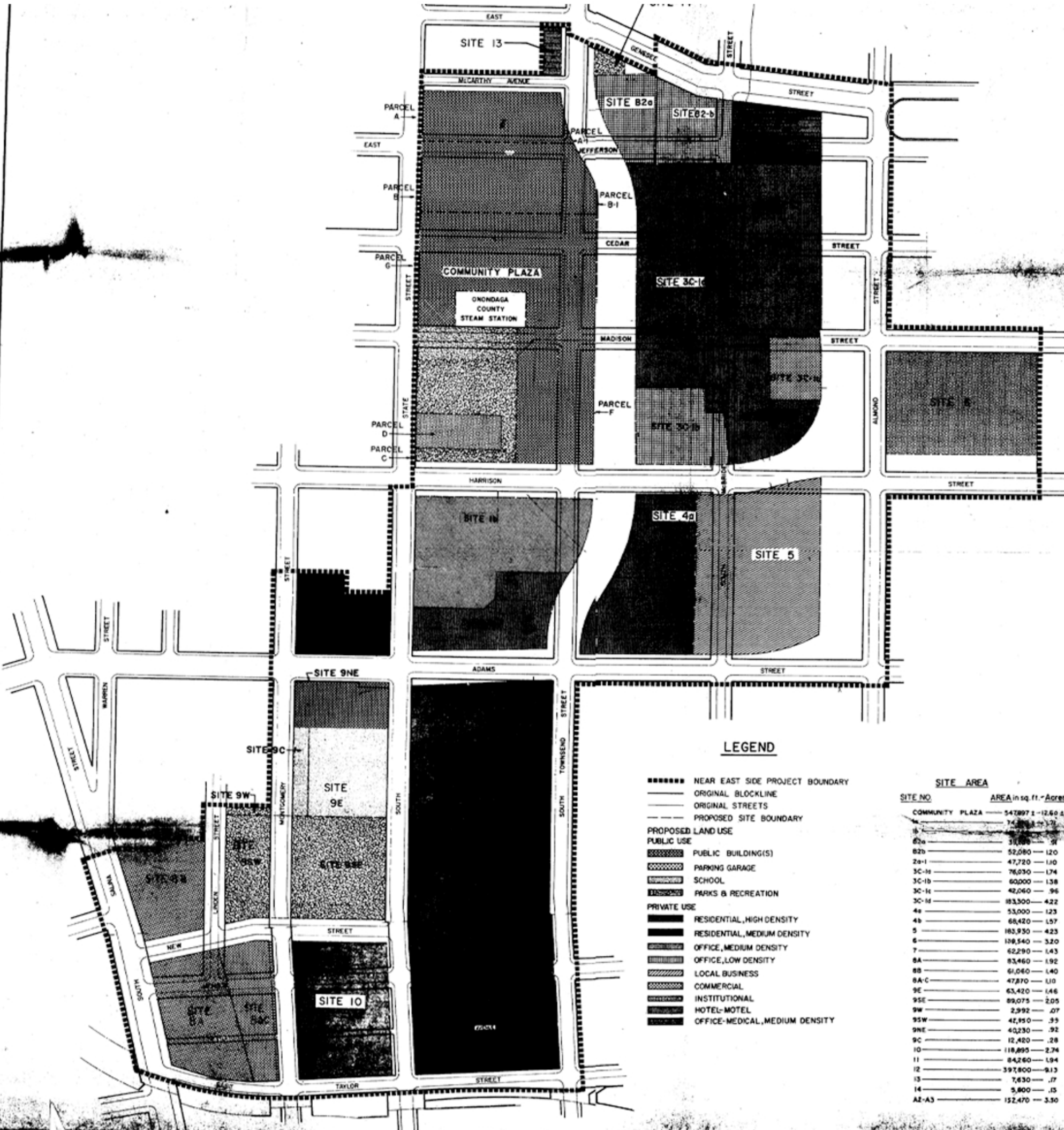
APPENDIX C

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

DISPOSITION SITE MAP

MAPS--TENTATIVE SEWER AND WATER SYSTEMS ADJUSTMENT;

PROPOSED R.O.W. ADJUSTMENTS AND STREET IMPROVEMENTS



LEGEND

- NEAR EAST SIDE PROJECT BOUNDARY
- ORIGINAL BLOCKLINE
- ORIGINAL STREETS
- PROPOSED SITE BOUNDARY
- PROPOSED LAND USE
- PUBLIC USE
 - PUBLIC BUILDING(S)
 - PARKING GARAGE
 - SCHOOL
 - PARKS & RECREATION
- PRIVATE USE
 - RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY
 - RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY
 - OFFICE, MEDIUM DENSITY
 - OFFICE, LOW DENSITY
 - LOCAL BUSINESS
 - COMMERCIAL
 - INSTITUTIONAL
 - HOTEL-MOTEL
 - OFFICE-MEDICAL, MEDIUM DENSITY

SITE AREA	
SITE NO.	AREA in sq. ft. - Acres
COMMUNITY PLAZA	547,897 ± - 12.60 ± (Excluding steam station)
13	74,000 ± - 1.70
B2a	31,000 ± - .71
B2b	52,080 ± - 1.20
2a-1	47,720 ± - 1.10
3C-1a	76,030 ± - 1.74
3C-1b	60,000 ± - 1.38
3C-1c	42,060 ± - .96
3C-1d	183,300 ± - 4.22
4a	53,000 ± - 1.23
4b	66,420 ± - 1.57
5	183,930 ± - 4.23
6	128,540 ± - 3.20
7	62,290 ± - 1.43
8A	83,460 ± - 1.92
8B	61,060 ± - 1.40
8A-C	47,870 ± - 1.10
9E	63,420 ± - 1.46
9SE	89,075 ± - 2.05
9W	2,992 ± - .07
9SW	47,950 ± - .33
9NE	40,230 ± - .92
9C	12,480 ± - .28
10	118,895 ± - 2.74
11	84,260 ± - 1.94
12	597,800 ± - 9.13
13	7,630 ± - .17
14	5,800 ± - .15
A2-A3	152,470 ± - 3.50



0 100 200 300 400
SCALE IN FEET

PREPARED BY: _____ DATE: _____

REVIEWED BY: _____ DATE: _____

DATE: _____ BY: _____

DATE: _____ BY: _____

DATE: _____ BY: _____

DATE: _____ BY: _____

PROJECT NO. MAP 30
APPLICATION FOR AMENDMENT NO. 3
TO LOAN AND GRANT CONTRACT

DISPOSITION SITE MAP

NEAR EAST SIDE
URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN IMPROVEMENT
AND
SYRACUSE URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
CITY OF SYRACUSE, COUNTY OF ONONDAGA

APPENDIX D
HOW URBAN RENEWAL WORKS

In the first Federal urban renewal legislation, namely Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, there is a basic principle--that is, it is a local program, conceived, planned, and carried out locally. While the emphasis seems to be on the local level there is still control from a higher level. The Federal government's role in urban renewal is "primarily one of providing financial assistance, leadership, and general program direction."¹

The local body authorized to carry out urban renewal projects as stated in Title I shall be the LPA or local public agency. The concept of a local public agency can cover a gamut of possible arrangements. There are great variations in public agencies in part due to various state statutes. The LPA's can range from a separate agency to already existing housing authorities. In some cases the government of the city can become the local public agency by having the program carried out through a department of the city government.

¹William L. Slayton, "The Operation and Achievements of the Urban Renewal Program," p. 196, taken from Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy, Wilson, ed., (M.I.T. Press, 1966).

The role of the LPA is really one of administration. The responsibility of making decisions is with the elected governing body of the locality. The governing body on the local level as stated before, has some control exerted over it by the Federal government. Several of the major controls it has are the following:

1. In order to receive Federal financial assistance the "local governing body must adopt a workable program for community improvement."² This helps to create a framework for all projects in the locality.
2. A resolution of the local governing body authorizing an application for Federal planning funds and designating the actual urban renewal area must accompany the application for the funds.
3. There must be a public hearing before a project is approved and the local governing body must officially adopt the plan, "find that it conforms to the general plans for the locality as a whole, and determine that the proposed relocation of families and individuals to be displaced is feasible."³ In cases involving

²Ibid., p. 196.

³Ibid.

demolition, rehabilitation, in order to achieve the desired objectives of the plan, must be determined to be impractical. The local governing body must recognize the responsibility of the city to take certain actions, such as changing zoning ordinances, vacating existing streets and accepting new ones.

Local reviews are also necessary in determining the local share of the project's cost. The local governing body is responsible for obtaining the necessary funds whether these funds are cash or non-cash local grants-in-aid (the installation of streets, utilities, and other site improvements or by providing parks or schools or other public facilities necessary to support the new uses of land in the project area.)

The urban renewal agency's responsibility is to see that the local program conforms to the intents of the Federal program. The agency also sees to it that the funds are used in the most effective manner.

The first step taken in starting a renewal project is that the local governing body finds the area selected to be a "slum, blighted, deteriorated, or deteriorating area."⁴ Data on individual buildings is included in a survey

⁴Ibid., p. 197.

and a planning application submitted to the urban renewal agency. If this is approved, the project is started.

During the planning stage the LPA conducts detailed studies, prepares plans and estimates, and determines the uses and conditions of buildings. This data gathered on the condition of buildings is used to determine the extent of clearance, rehabilitation, or both to be used.

If there is to be dislocation of residents the LPA establishes the feasibility of a relocation program. A detailed study of housing needs and requirements is conducted and local relocation standards for decent and safe housing are made at this point. If a shortage of housing exists, action is taken to produce needed housing. Business relocation is also studied at this time.

If rehabilitation is to be involved, detailed surveys of buildings and the economic feasibility of it are conducted. The financial conditions of owners and residents of future rehabilitation buildings are investigated to see if these people are capable of undertaking the rehabilitation. A special mortgage insurance program has been established in order to provide necessary aid in conducting the rehabilitation.

Appraisals are made to set the cost of the properties to be acquired. Titles of ownership are also located. Land disposition and marketability surveys are prepared in

order to serve as a guide to developing new uses of the land.

The end product of all this is a urban renewal plan, a "formal statement of the goals and objectives of the project, the treatment to be utilized, and the controls over new uses."⁵ This is the plan that the local governing body approves and is the basis for financial assistance from the government.

Two basic planning aids which help coordinate subsequent projects are the CRP--Community Renewal Program (a long-range urban renewal program coordinated with all other renewal related local programs) and the GNRP--General Neighborhood Renewal Program (covering a larger area where more than one project is to be staged in a period of not over ten years).

After the plans have been approved by the local governing body and the urban renewal agency, Federal financial assistance is made available under a loan and grant contract. The net cost of a renewal project or the gross cost of land acquisition plus the cost of demolition plus costs of site improvements (drainage, curbs, walks, etc.) and of supporting facilities (schools, playgrounds) in or serving the project area plus costs of planning, administration, and

⁵Ibid., p. 198.

interest minus the price obtained from resale of the land is to be paid in the following way: two-thirds by the Federal Government (through capital grants) and the remaining one-third to be paid by the locality in form of cash or equivalent non-cash grants-in-aid or a combination of both. For cities under 50,000 the ratio is lowered to one-quarter for the locality and three-quarters by the Federal Government.

Besides capital grants as a form of financial assistance from the Federal Government, there are other forms of aid available:

Advances--for the preparation of project plans; the cost of planning is ultimately figured into the overall cost of the project.

Temporary loans--serves as working capital for the project; the LPA can obtain loans from the Federal Government or from private institutions.

Relocation grants--covers costs of moving and losses of property; covers relocation adjustment payments and small business dislocation payments.

Definitive loans--available to localities where land is disposed of under long-term leases rather than by sale; they are repaid from income under the lease.

The ultimate sequence of action in an urban renewal project is as follows:

1. Acquisition of land--either by negotiation with owners or by condemnation. The LPA maintains properties and collects rent while the property is still occupied.
2. In cases of rehabilitation, surveys are completed and the LPA serves as an advisory agency--giving advice on architectural, financial, or construction problems.
3. Demolition (by private contractor).
4. Other site improvements (streets, drainage, etc.) are provided by private contractor.
5. After the area is cleared, it is advertised publicly for development.
6. New construction is started following the urban renewal plans.

APPENDIX E

RESEARCH METHOD

Before much investigation was done for this study I believed that the main source of information would be the Urban Renewal Agency in the City of Syracuse. My first attempt to obtain specific information on the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project was at this local agency. I was told to come back another time for they were too busy that day to see me. I did return at a later date and at this time the process of urban renewal and the Near East Side Project was explained briefly to me. This time (as well as the previous time) I expressed my desire to look at the original applications for the Near East Side--Survey and Planning and the Grant--that had been submitted to Urban Renewal (Federal level). Because these applications were the major compilation of information submitted, I was sure they would be on file. I was told that I did not need these applications for my study--that what information that was related to me covered exactly the information contained in the original applications. I was told that this request was not easy to fulfill because, putting it simply, the people in the agency did not know where these applications would be. I was given various explanations for this--the applications are over ten years old, the agency had recently

moved to a new office, making things difficult to locate, and the librarian was in a car accident and was out for the past few weeks because of broken legs. I tried to obtain the applications once more from the Syracuse agency. Again I was told that I did not need them and that they had not been found--even the director of the Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency, David Michel, did not know where to begin to look for them.

Having no luck at the local agency, I tried the regional office in New York City. Arriving at the Department of Housing and Urban Development Office at Federal Plaza, I was confronted with a situation similar to that of the Syracuse office--they were unable to find the applications for the Near East Side Urban Renewal Project. The person in charge of Syracuse projects said that applications and information is kept on file for one or two years and then is thrown into a basement somewhere making it virtually impossible to find anything.

Everyone I spoke with (except those who were with the local Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency) expressed surprise that the original applications for the Near East Side could not be found at the Syracuse office.

Writing to Washington in an attempt to find the missing applications proved to be a wasted effort. My letter was returned with the words, OUT OF PRINT stamped on it.

Syracuse University

School of Architecture
417 Slocum Hall
Syracuse New York 13210
tel (315) 476-5541 ext 2256

8 March 1974

U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Sir

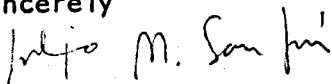
We are conducting research on the history of urban renewal in Syracuse.
It seems that the below mentioned project can't be found at the local
and regional agencies. Could you please send us a copy.

"The Survey and Planning Application and the Grant Application
1958-59 Made by Syracuse for the Near-East Side Renewal Project"

OUT OF PRINT

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely



Julio San Jose
Professor

JSJ/sm

Project: New East Side - NYR-30
(FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)

Site	Development	Land area	Federal grant	State share	Local share	Total	Cost of construction	40% cost	Original assessment	1972 assessment	Projected Net Area	Original Employment	Current Employment	Projected Employment	Previous Land Use	Projected Land Use	Previous Housing Units	% vacant	Projected Housing Units	Previous floor area	% Utilized	Projected floor area	2.1 Previous Land Use	2.1 Unimproved	2.1 Projected Land Use	2.1 Unimproved	2.1 Projected Open Space	2.1 Previous Open Space	2.1	2.1
Community Plaza	North Bridge, Broadway, Rutherf. Safe Bldg., Finberg Garage, Courthouse	547847	5870187	1467464	1467464	8805665	15360000 (2500000)	2294560 (810000)	1,096,000	—	(100000)	394	1107	1167	Public Service	Public Service	172	4% (1)	0	410585	75% 321250	611471 (+80000)	301423	118077	57477/100000 (68000/100000)	3520	250,000 (100000)	508	0	
East 6	Finberg, Hall (old), Bell (new)	316580	2350545	582474	582474	3495313	(6500000) [*]	(844000)	322114	—	1/100000	70	2	(150)	Public Res	Hotel	72	4% (10)	50	214167	57% 140609	(105000)	130977	75303	(50%) 64774 216580	0	(307)	0		
West 6	Marine Midland & Office Bldg.	91760	758489	239586	239586	1437662	2600000	579600	219572	469000	64500	48	110	190	Public Res	Office	65	8% (5)	0	97989	77% 29170	25000 (+20000)	65150	41%	279490	0	7010	0		
West 1	Melrose Office Bldg.	47720	511196	255560	255560	766756	3000000	438000	86545	552400	558400	91	250	250	Public Res	Office	1	0%	0	55892	77% 4455	10000	32450	5%	3818	40% 4290	0	0	0	
East Plaza	Marine Midland, 3000 Tower, 2, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100	513860	5500017	1374998	1374998	8344613	15500000 (1500000) (1500000)	219477 (85000) 2793000	1644350	624912	139	50	757	Public Res	Office	338	7% (2)	457 (-300)	474575	94% 445913	167000 (100000) (100000)	541514 (100000) 518600	47%	241574	167000 (100000) (100000)	0	150,000 (100000) (100000)	0		
West 4	Townsend Tower	131420	1278306	319528	319528	1917363	5000000	75,000	120,970	765725	52,000	97	8	10	Public Res	Residential	24	3% (2)	200	191013	57% 161101	150,000	53128	47%	57067	18150 11520	0	60,000 (100000)	0	

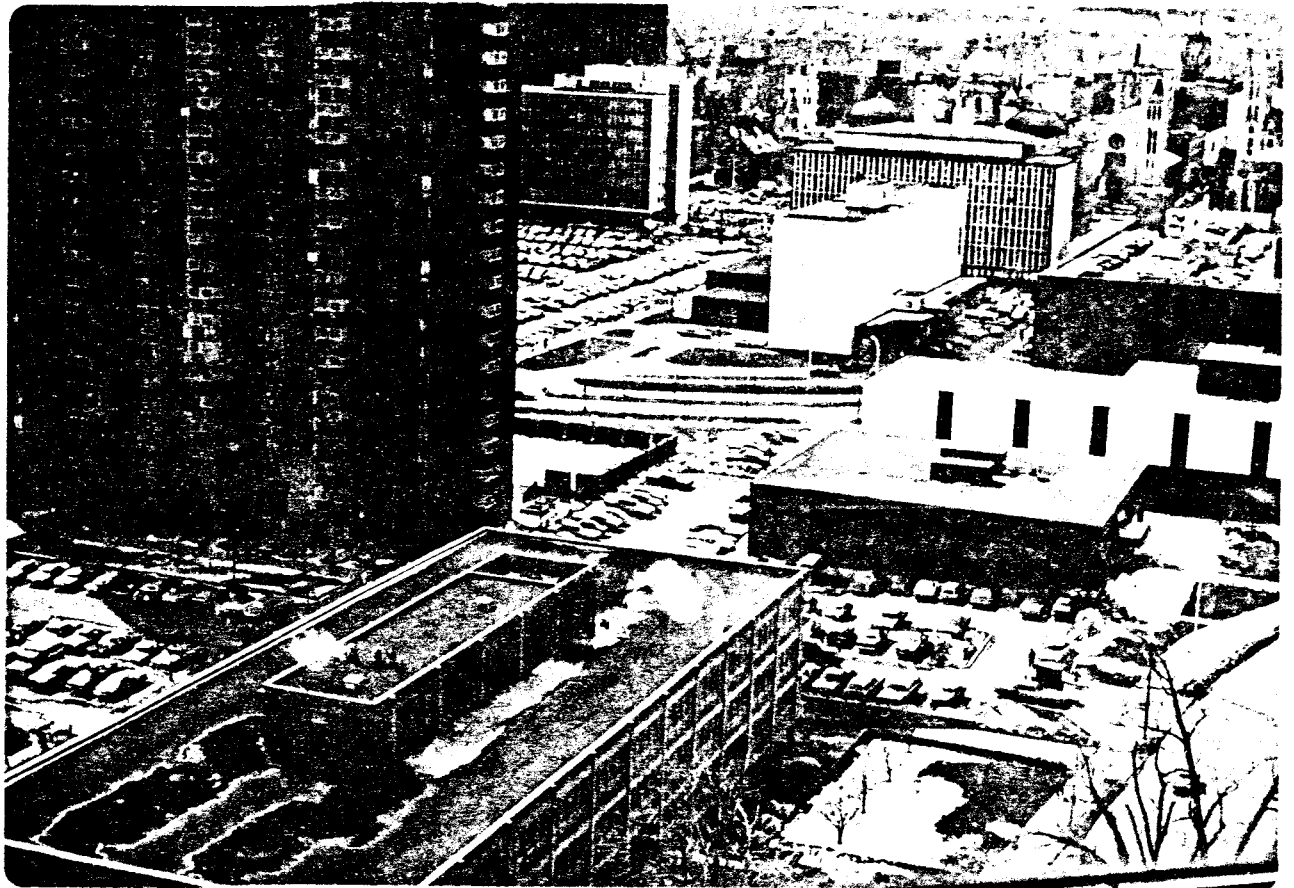
Project: Near East Side - N.Y.R.-30

Development	Land area	Federal Grant	State share	Local share	Total	Cost of construction	1972 Assessment	1973 Assessment	Projected Net Assesment	Original Employment	Current Employment	Projected Employment	Previous Land Use	Projected Land Use	Previous Housing Units	% vacant Housing Units	Projected Housing Units	Previous floor area	% Utilized	Projected Floor area	Previous Land housing	Unimproved	Projected Land leverage	Unimproved	Projected Open Space	Previous Comm. Space				
Plaza St. S. side - w.c.	183,930	201,207	503,151	503,151	301,940	1,300,000	179,377	—	613,000	39	40	45	Res. Development	Commercial	36	3% (2)	0	27,782	30%	50,804	21,500	51,873	198	1,300,000	0	0	0			
N.Y.S. Mental Hygiene Dr. side - w.c.	139,540	150,185	329,240	329,240	2,251,665	5,000,000	171,250	—	—	10	100	350	Residential	Residential	116	4% (7)	0	129,241	94%	121,486	75,000	48,498	582	2,251,665	0	43,000	30%	0		
Garage lot	62,290	70,361	175,878	175,878	1,055,374	340,000	10,770	—	300,000	2	2	3	Res. Development	Commercial	55	11% (6)	0	52,243	80%	40,496	0	3,470	47	0	0	0	0			
Office Bldg.	144,520	140,523	351,256	351,256	2,107,750	2,200,000	32,100	295,095	1,000,000	45	30	550	Res. Development	Office	111	0%	0	108,537	94%	102,025	115,000	48,000	702	2,107,750	0	0	0			
Office Bldg.	47,810	63,865	159,631	159,640	957,732	700,000	123,140	173,957	590,850	23	15	50	Res. Development	Office	18	0%	0	58,735	95%	55,789	16,000	702	282	957,732	0	700	30,000	0		
Fire Station	40,230	44,675	11,667	11,663	670,102	500,000	73,000	12,702	—	9	0	10	Res. Development	Public Use	8	0%	0	20,583	54%	17,265	15,000	23%	702	670,102	0	700	31,000	0		

Project: Near East Side NYR-30

[illegible]





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