

MI  
Kalamazoo

**KALAMAZOO**

1980

*A planning study by* **VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES**

*and* **LARRY SMITH & COMPANY**



## INTRODUCTION

This is downtown Kalamazoo, the urban heart of a prosperous, expanding region. It is the center of a community that has displayed leadership in government and education; a community of parks, trees, beautiful homes and colleges; one which is gaining world-wide recognition as representative of America and its great Midwest.

Kalamazoo can insure continued healthy growth by intelligent, long range planning—or—it can depend upon haphazard expediencies and face the threat of physical and economic blight; blight which is already threatening to retard and choke the healthy growth of the whole community.

The time for action is now, before the cure becomes too costly. Kalamazoo must insure its continuing leadership; it must realize its potential to the maximum.

The question is *how*?

Though planning problems exist elsewhere in Kalamazoo, no section is so immediately threatened as the core of the city. This threat, in turn, endangers the entire metropolitan area. Just as the human body is dependent upon the heart for its life giving beat, so is the modern urban community dependent upon its heart—the central business district.

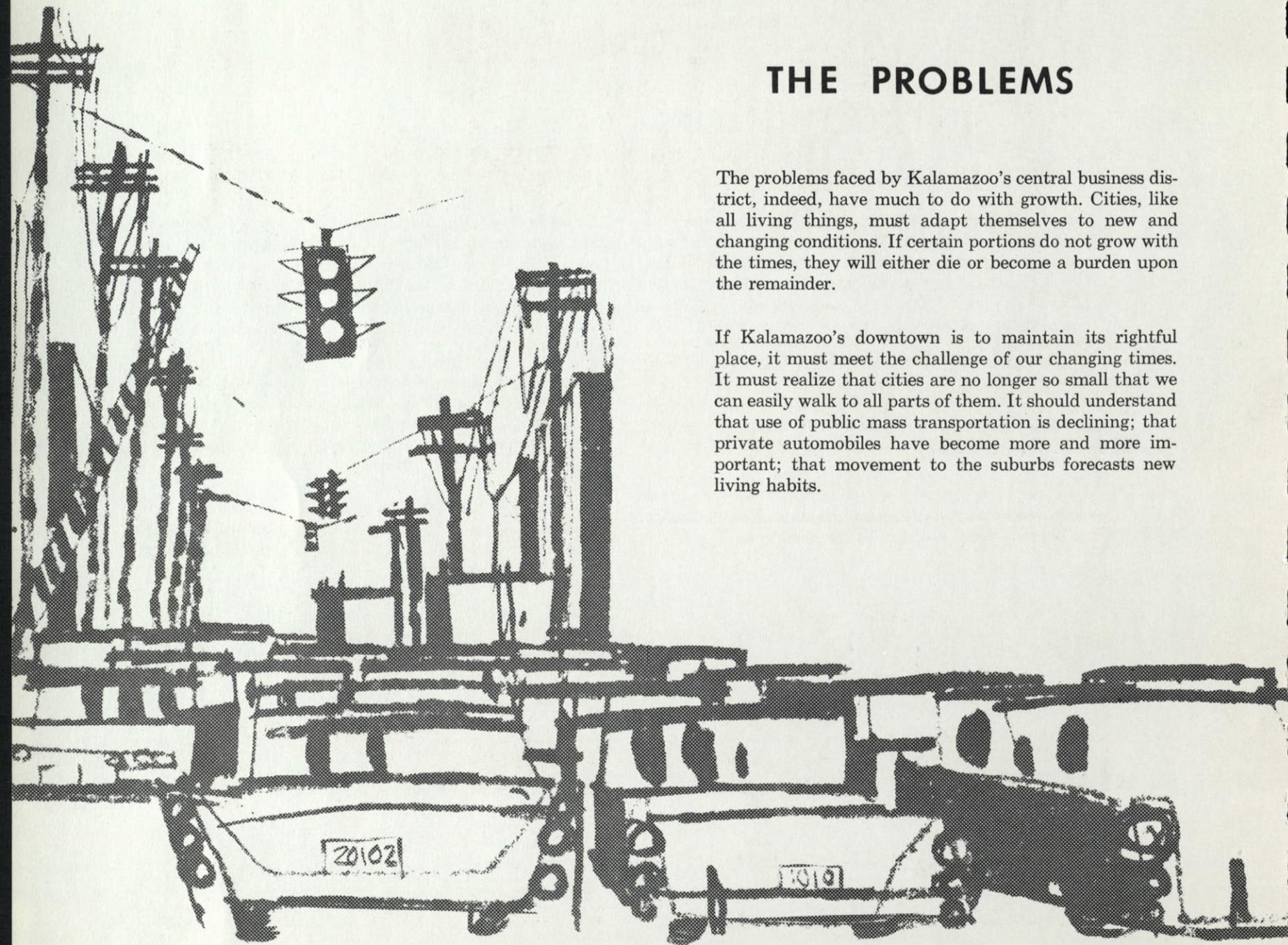
Fortunately a large group of people in Kalamazoo recognize its problems. Their deep concern has led to this study—a study which is built on a philosophy and approach that will bring not only long range, but immediate benefits to the entire region.

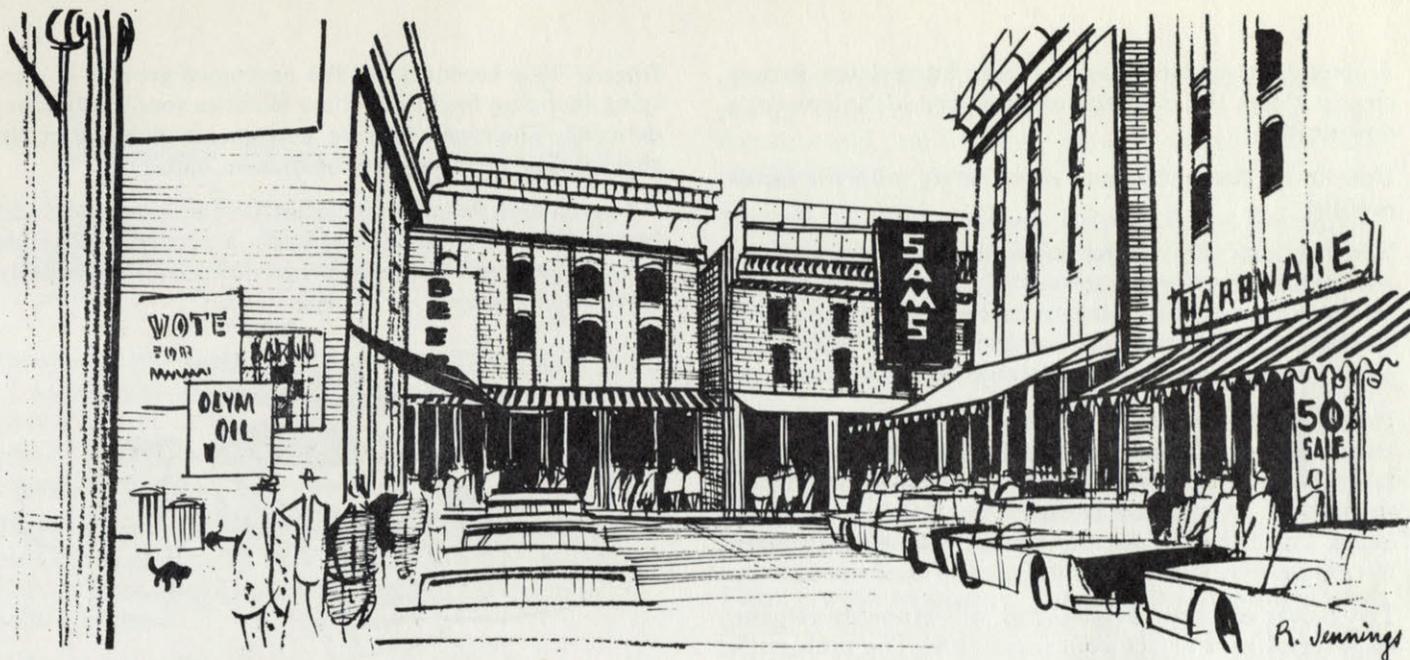
This study in itself is not an end but a beginning. It establishes a concept which will fuse community interest into a force to assure and guide the healthy future growth of Kalamazoo.

## THE PROBLEMS

The problems faced by Kalamazoo's central business district, indeed, have much to do with growth. Cities, like all living things, must adapt themselves to new and changing conditions. If certain portions do not grow with the times, they will either die or become a burden upon the remainder.

If Kalamazoo's downtown is to maintain its rightful place, it must meet the challenge of our changing times. It must realize that cities are no longer so small that we can easily walk to all parts of them. It should understand that use of public mass transportation is declining; that private automobiles have become more and more important; that movement to the suburbs forecasts new living habits.

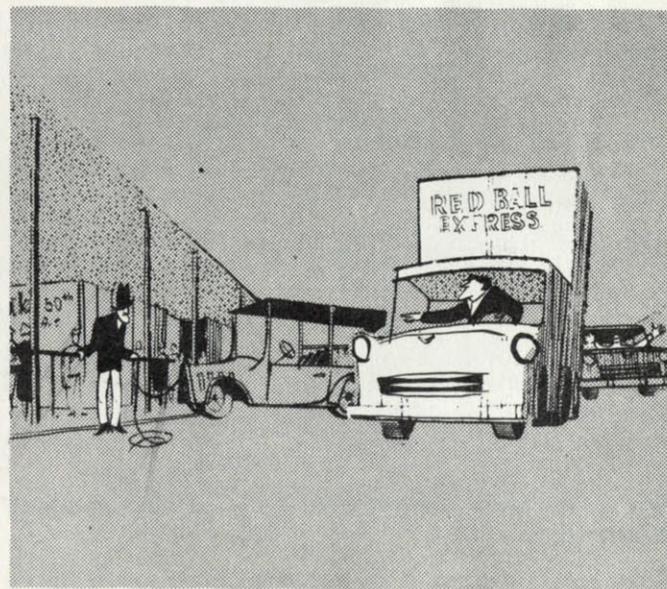
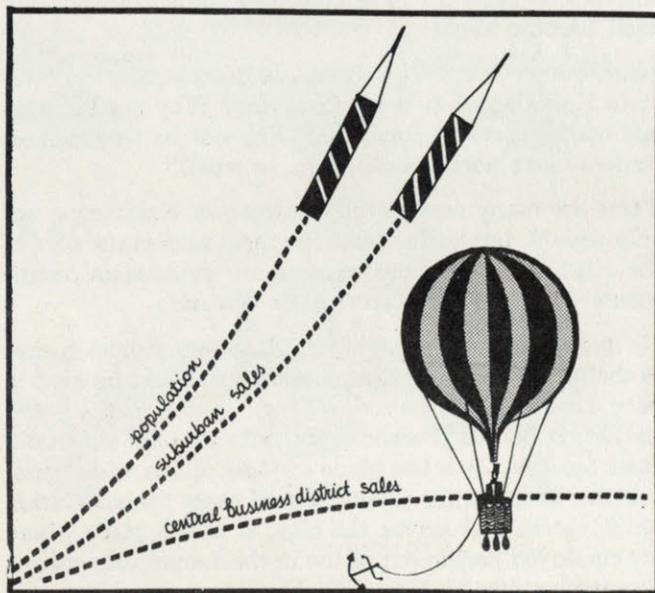




Normally expected benefits of community expansion—economic gain, upgrading of buildings, construction of new facilities—have not been shared by Kalamazoo's downtown. Moreover, in our intensely competitive free enterprise, we cannot, nor should we expect to, receive automatic benefits.

The age when you could park directly in front of a store

has almost disappeared. New means of transportation, material handling, and construction are in common use daily. Our downtowns must now aggressively meet the challenge and gain the advantages offered by new efficiencies, new economic concepts, and new techniques—all of which have become a part of the American way of life.



A look at the many complex and interrelated factors clearly shows the outstanding problems of Kalamazoo's downtown.

*How do we live better and more safely with the automobile?*

The constantly increasing population demands a higher and higher number of private automobiles per family, and a corresponding increase in service vehicles. It is estimated that by 1980, Kalamazoo County can expect a forty-five per cent increase in automobile registrations.

If we were to retain the present street pattern, this increase, plus that generated by more intense use of downtown, would force us to devote more than five million square feet of space to the movement of these vehicles alone. This is more than four times the area now utilized for public rights of way in the central business district.

The motor car has become, and will probably remain, an integral part of our community life. The problem is not the automobile itself but, rather, how to accommodate it.

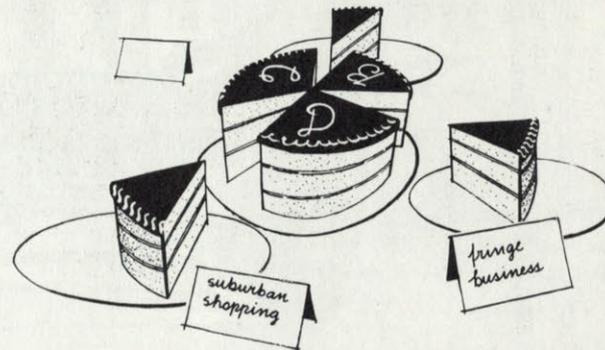


*How do we meet competition from outlying shopping districts?*

Growth of our urban areas has been concentrated on the

fringes. This accounts for the enormous growth of outlying shopping facilities. These facilities result only from demand. Their competitive position is maintained by their ability to serve their customers better.

Although such suburban facilities have siphoned sales and business formerly going downtown, a portion of this loss must be assigned to the failure of downtown to properly meet its challenges.



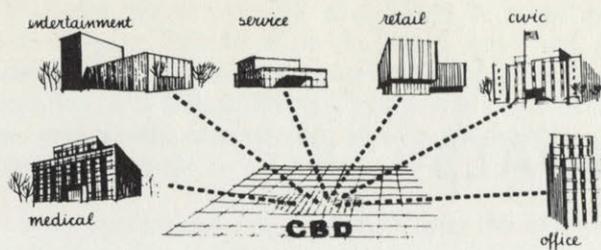
*How do we fight the ever tightening ring of blight, vacancies, and deterioration surrounding downtown?*

A natural result of functional decline is the spread of low grade, inconsistent, and uneconomical land use. This blight starts on the fringes of the central business district and, as buildings age, deteriorate, and become obsolete, it moves closer and closer to the hard core. Ultimately, even the hard core feels the effect and may itself become blighted.

Many people ask, "Why should we do anything to downtown Kalamazoo? Is it worth saving? Why not be satisfied with its present condition? Why not let the business centers move north, south, east, or west?"

There are many reasons why downtown Kalamazoo not only should, but will remain the most important part of the city. Some of these reasons are commercial, some economic, others are historical or cultural.

To understand what the central business district means to the remainder of the community, it should be kept in mind that Kalamazoo's downtown is not just a retail district. It houses governmental, cultural, and entertainment facilities; it is the home of most offices and hotels; it is the terminus for practically all mass transportation which enters and leaves the city; it is the place where one employed person out of ten in the community spends his working day.

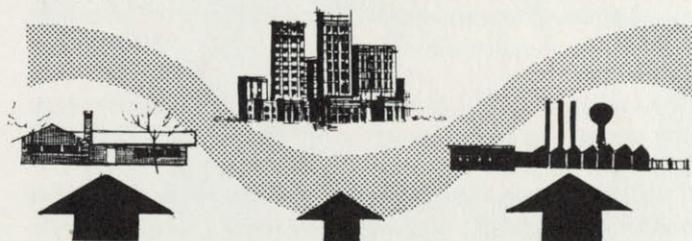


Downtown Kalamazoo will always remain the focal point of community life. Eighty per cent of the attorneys, sixty per cent of the physicians, and twenty-three per cent of the real estate brokers in Kalamazoo have their offices downtown.

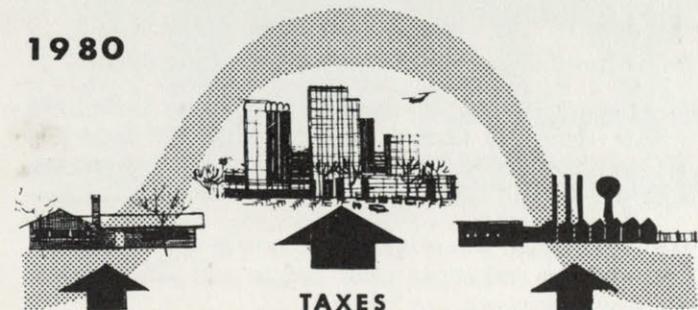
These are only a few examples of the diversity and magnitude of the population that uses and works in downtown Kalamazoo, the most accessible part of the entire metropolitan region.

If downtown suffers, the city will also suffer. For example, nearly seven per cent of Kalamazoo's total city real estate tax is borne by downtown property. Yet this property occupies only 0.8 per cent of the whole city

**1957**



**1980**



area. If the central district is allowed to deteriorate, the rest of the city must bear the share of taxes which formerly and properly were borne by the central business district.

Historically the downtown district, being the original core of Kalamazoo, inherits the advantage of central location. It benefits by the advancement of transportation facilities. This historical pattern of growth makes it likely that downtown will remain at its present location and that no major displacement will occur.

The area surrounding Bronson Park is the hub of Kalamazoo's cultural and civic activities. Around it are grouped the Playhouse, the City Hall, the County Building, churches, the new library-museum, and other important public buildings.

Finally, when we examine the ultimate measure of what makes a downtown successful, we find that it concerns not only physical and material elements but, most important, the feelings of the people who are the final judges.

It has been demonstrated that people still prefer downtown for many diverse activities. In our planning we must always remember that the essence of the successful central business district still lies in the creation of an environment where person-to-person contacts can be enjoyed in a convenient, pleasant, and relaxed atmosphere.

Once we understand the importance of downtown Kalamazoo, its problems can be realistically attacked and solved.

Kalamazoo has repeatedly demonstrated it has the will, the ability, and the economic foundation upon which to base healthy growth. There is no reason to believe that its central business district cannot participate in this growth process.

So we must plan not only for the present but for the near and the distant future. We must design for growth, and we must design around a new and exciting planning philosophy which will give our plan both beauty and substance.

## PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

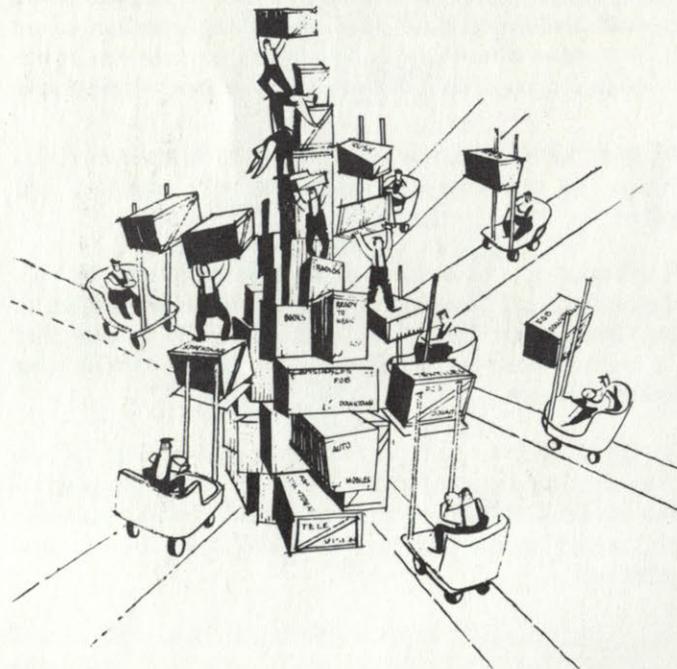
Our philosophy and goals must be broad and bold.

*We must think in terms of comprehensive long range planning for Kalamazoo rather than in terms of temporary stop-gap measures.*

*Further, we cannot and must not take the defeatist attitude of merely saving Kalamazoo's downtown, but must take active and positive steps to retain it as the heart of the entire metropolitan community.*

From this philosophy, we have derived our planning goals.

*The most productive use of the land.*



Wasted land and floor space should not be tolerated. No downtown can afford extravagance of this type.

*The fusion of governmental, commercial, and cultural activities into a vital entity serving all elements of the community.*

The importance of this is apparent when we consider the variety of activities which are housed in the central business district. The creation of an environment which will stimulate interplay of these activities must be a prime goal of our planning effort.

*The provision of easy access to downtown.*

Travel should be easy and convenient not only in the central business district but in the entire arterial system of the region.

Thoroughfares should facilitate a flow of traffic which, upon arriving downtown, will find it easy to reach adequate storage space convenient to the point of destination.

*Minimizing demolition necessary for implementing the plan.*

Careful analysis should be made to insure that only the absolute minimum of demolition is necessary. Experience has demonstrated that this goal can be achieved by good planning.

*Separation of pedestrian and vehicular activity.*

If automobiles are to continue using our downtown streets, there will soon be little room left for those person-to-person activities that are the essence of our business, social, and cultural life.

We must assign the private automobile, the truck, the bus, and the pedestrian their proper and safe place in our new downtown.

Because the concept involving the separation of vehicles and pedestrians forms an important cornerstone of our plan, let us examine it in more detail.

Each year the American public is using more and more automobiles. Each year the automobile is using more and more space. This trend can do nothing but eventually squeeze the pedestrian out of the streets and out of downtown. But, it is this pedestrian, and not his automobile, who buys goods, sees movies, eats in restaurants, and signs the mortgage.

We must also protect the pedestrian from the enormous volume of surface traffic which enters our downtown area each day. In addition, we must provide the service vehicle and the private vehicle with their own separate paths of travel and separate storage facilities.

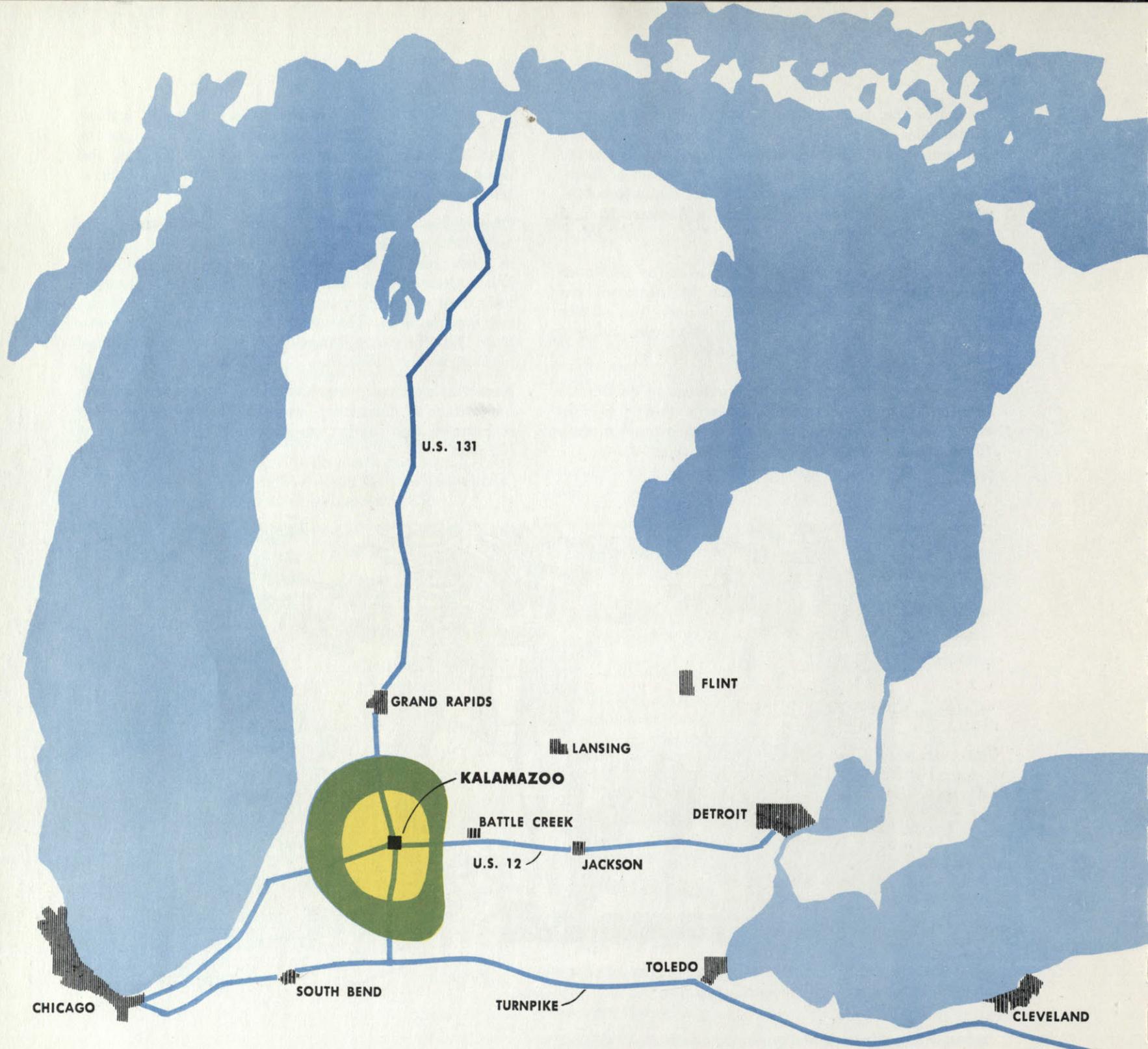
Obviously, no matter how many millions of dollars are spent in improving and widening streets which now criss-cross our downtown, we can never hope to accommodate the auto properly and safely within its boundaries.

We propose that these same millions be spent instead on a realistic alternative, on a downtown replanned so that it is no longer necessary for vehicles to enter the heart of the city—the creation of a pedestrian central business district.

Once we have properly used the land, brought the people safely into our downtown, provided them the ultimate in goods, service, and attractiveness, they will find that it is a pleasure to do their errands; that it is possible to walk from one activity to another in pleasant and attractive surroundings. The many natural beauties of downtown Kalamazoo will again be a source of genuine pleasure to the pedestrian.

Now that we have recognized the problems; realized the importance of downtown, and established our planning philosophy and goals, we can begin the creation of our plan.





PRIMARY TRADE AREA —   
SECONDARY TRADE AREA — 

## REGIONAL TRADE AREA

Kalamazoo is a major economic center, sharing the South Michigan trade region with Battle Creek and Grand Rapids.

Kalamazoo's trade area is part of the rapidly developing urban belt joining Detroit and Chicago.

It lies on U.S. 12, the spinal artery of this belt, and on U.S. 131, a major north-south thoroughfare.

The city's regional sphere of influence is determined primarily by four factors:

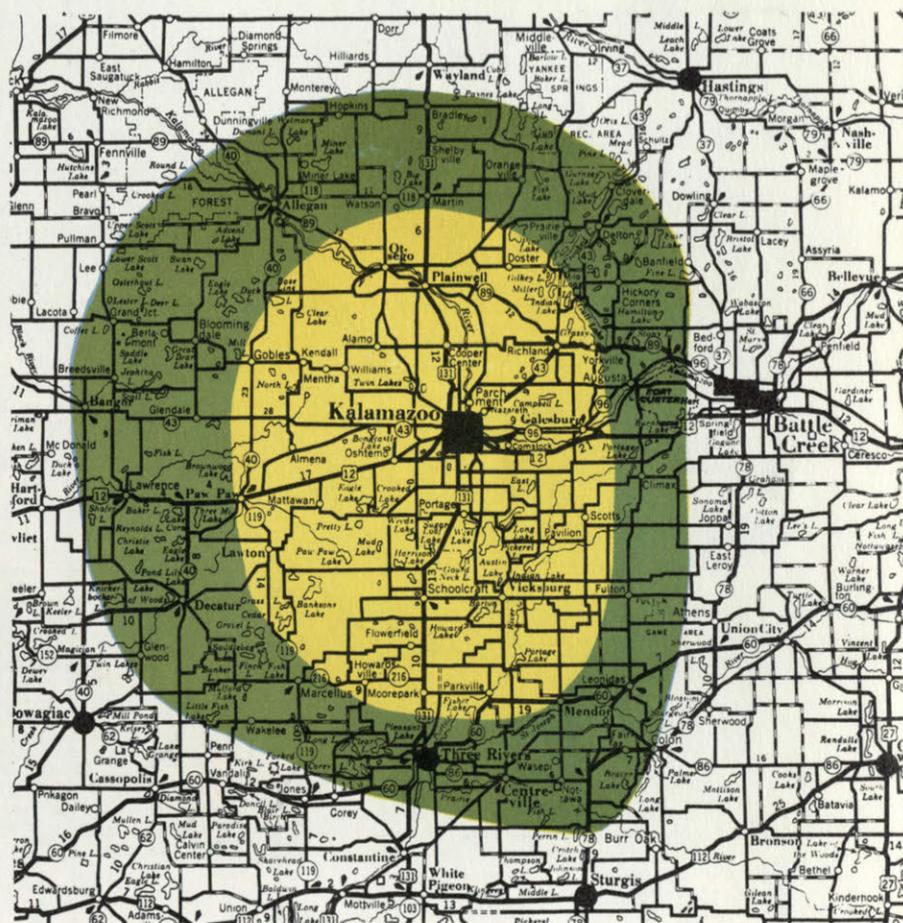
- The major settlement pattern
- Location and character of natural and man-made barriers
- The competitive influence of outlying facilities, and
- Access characteristics of the area

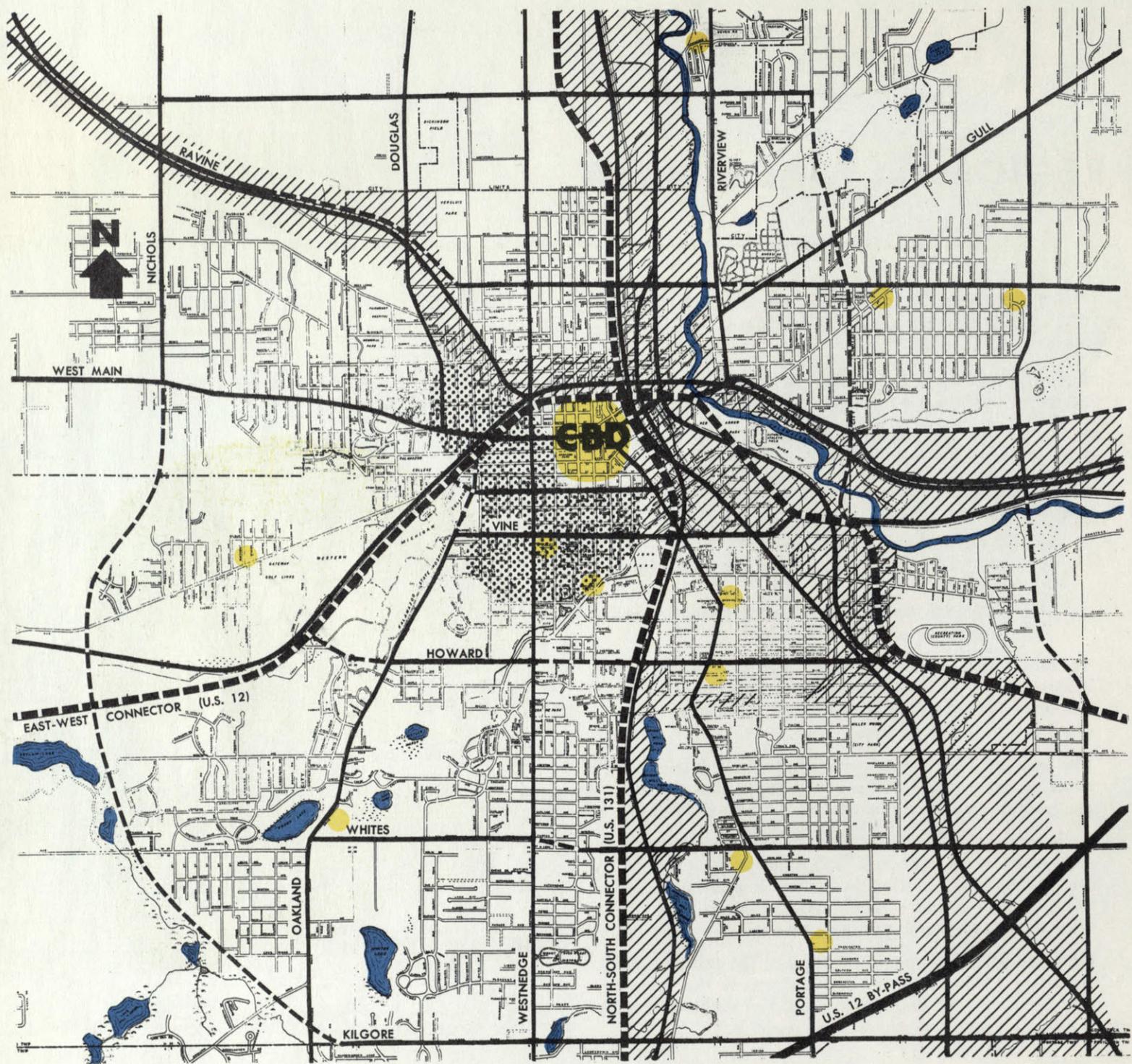
To reflect significant variations in the influence and drawing power of Kalamazoo's central business district, two zones, a primary and secondary, have been recognized within the city's trade area.

The primary zone immediately surrounding Kalamazoo contains the majority of the urban population and feels the greatest impact of the central business district.

Surrounding this primary zone is the more distant secondary zone which, although still influenced by central business district facilities, feels their impact much less than does the primary zone. This secondary zone contains a predominately rural population.

Having determined the extent of both the primary and secondary trade areas, we next estimated the income available to the central business district facilities based on income levels and expenditure patterns.





**LEGEND**

 INDUSTRIAL  
 OLDER RESIDENTIAL  
 RAILROADS

 EXISTING MAJOR THOROUGHFARES  
 PROPOSED EXTENSIONS  
 PROPOSED INTRA-URBAN CONNECTORS

 MAJOR SHOPPING AREAS

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

Factors which influence and establish the city's trade area also strongly affect the central business district's form and function. Competitive facilities, thoroughfares, rivers, railroads, and industry all exert their influence.

As the total Kalamazoo urban complex has grown, opportunities for suburban retailing have increased rapidly, following a nation-wide pattern. While most of these developments properly fill an immediate suburban need, some tend to furnish goods and services more effectively marketed downtown. A replanned central business district coinciding with new vigorous merchandising activity can once again attract this trade, benefiting the whole central core.

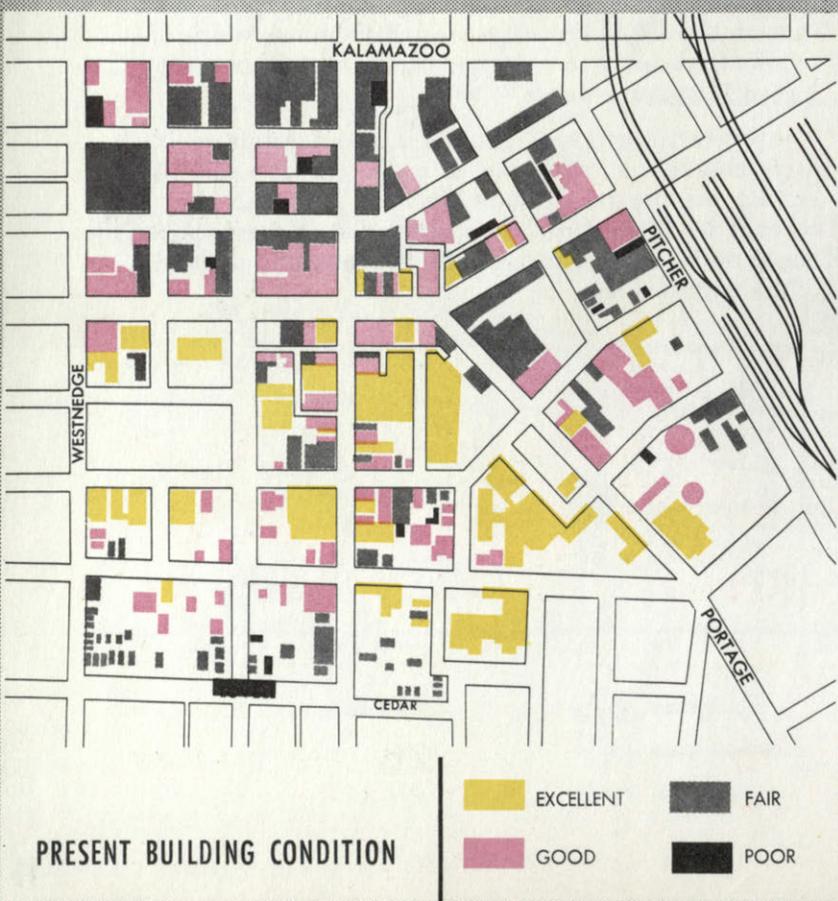
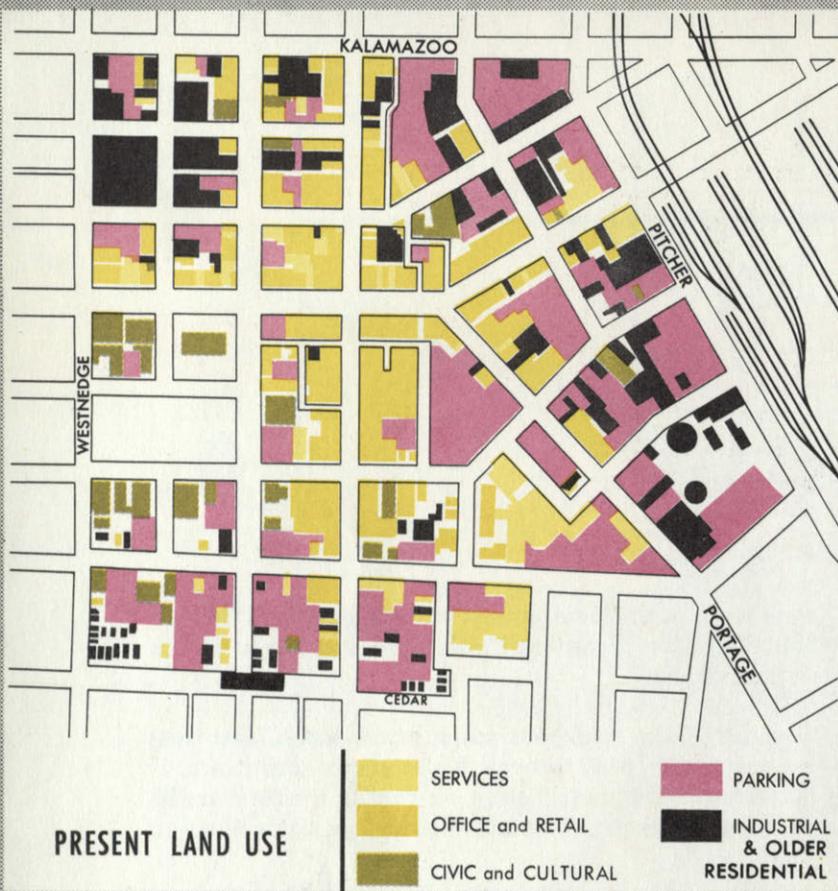
Most often, physical features present barriers and divisions preventing healthy growth and development of central business areas. In Kalamazoo these physical features are arranged so that the Kalamazoo River, the railroads, and resulting industry have blocked growth to the north and east. Therefore, expansion has been to the

west and south. Here, however, lack of a well defined boundary has diluted and weakened the fringe of the downtown core.

Because of the numerous major north-south, east-west arteries which pass through Kalamazoo's downtown, it is estimated that nearly sixty per cent of the total traffic entering the central business district has no destination there.

The thoroughfare plan proposed by the City Plan Commission in 1950 incorporates recommendations which, if followed, will serve to assist and expedite traffic converging on Kalamazoo's core.

The proposed north-south and east-west connectors would carry this enormous amount of traffic not through but around the central business district. The relief from through traffic provided by construction of these thoroughfares is imperative to the effective internal operation of the central core.



## INTERNAL FACTORS

Shifting our gaze to the central core itself, let us first take inventory of this area's assets and liabilities. To do this we must discover where business is conducted now, and we must evaluate these present activities, considering their condition, size, and use.

Our detailed studies of present land use have shown a clear-cut occupancy pattern. Retail areas stretch out along Burdick Street and Michigan Avenue, with their geographical center somewhere between Michigan and South Street.

Extensive, pleasant green areas are concentrated around the civic and religious institutions bordering on Bronson Park; hospital and research facilities are conveniently grouped in the southeast corner of downtown. However, industrial, warehousing, and older residential buildings, many of them fast declining, surround, penetrate, and blight the core on all sides.

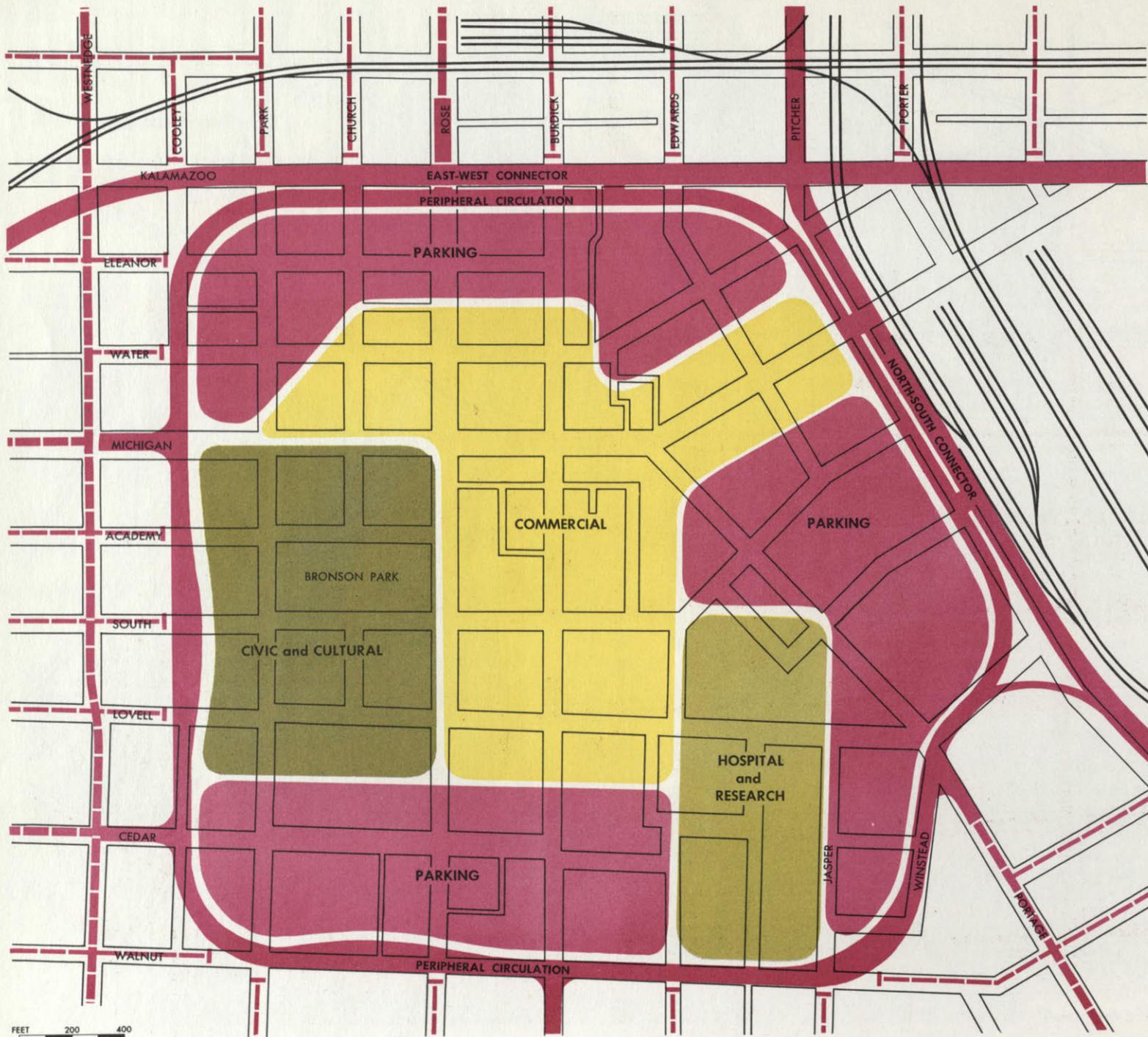
This pattern of land use is punctured by isolated and sometimes unrelated parking facilities. The pattern is further complicated and disrupted by major traffic arteries which compartmentalize the area, destroying its cohesiveness.

From the present downtown land use pattern, it is apparent that a reapportioning and consolidation of the major land uses is desirable and necessary to obtain an effective and smoothly functioning central business district.



## SCHEMATIC PRESENT LAND USE





SCHEMATIC FUTURE LAND USE

## FUTURE LAND USE

This is a schematic plan of the new central business district. The required land uses have been reapportioned and located allowing each to realize maximum mutual benefits from its neighbors.

To make certain that adequate land will be available for future requirements of the various central business district functions, area projections were made. These are illustrated on the accompanying chart which shows the proportions of the various land uses in Kalamazoo's central business district both now and in the future.

In 1980, an estimated 11,500 parking spaces will be needed, using approximately four million square feet of land. Some of these parking areas will be property formerly occupied by older homes, wholesale enterprises and industrial activities. These functions have been reduced in size and relocated so that only the small number necessary for an efficiently functioning central business district has been left. Owners of these properties will find their holdings in Kalamazoo's revitalized downtown much more valuable when devoted to this more intensive use. The older marginal residential areas have disappeared completely.

Another striking feature is that the retail area has not perceptibly changed in size. This is a result of the more efficient use of existing space rather than of a decrease or stabilization of total business volume. Retail activities in 1980 not only make use of now vacant floor space but also of new, more efficient replacements.

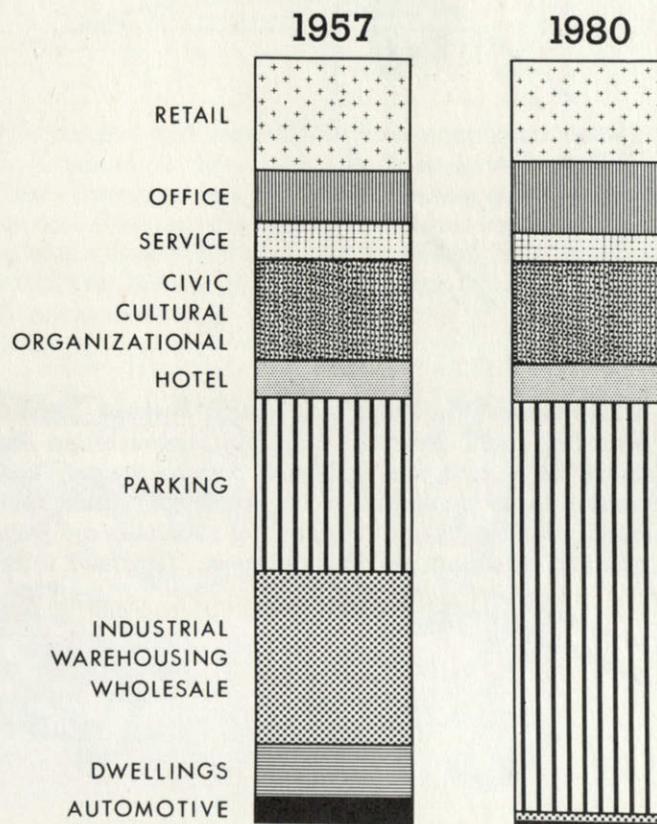
Hotel space has not changed appreciably. However, upgrading, remodeling, and replacement of present facilities with new structures will undoubtedly occur as downtown once again becomes an important stopping point for travelers.

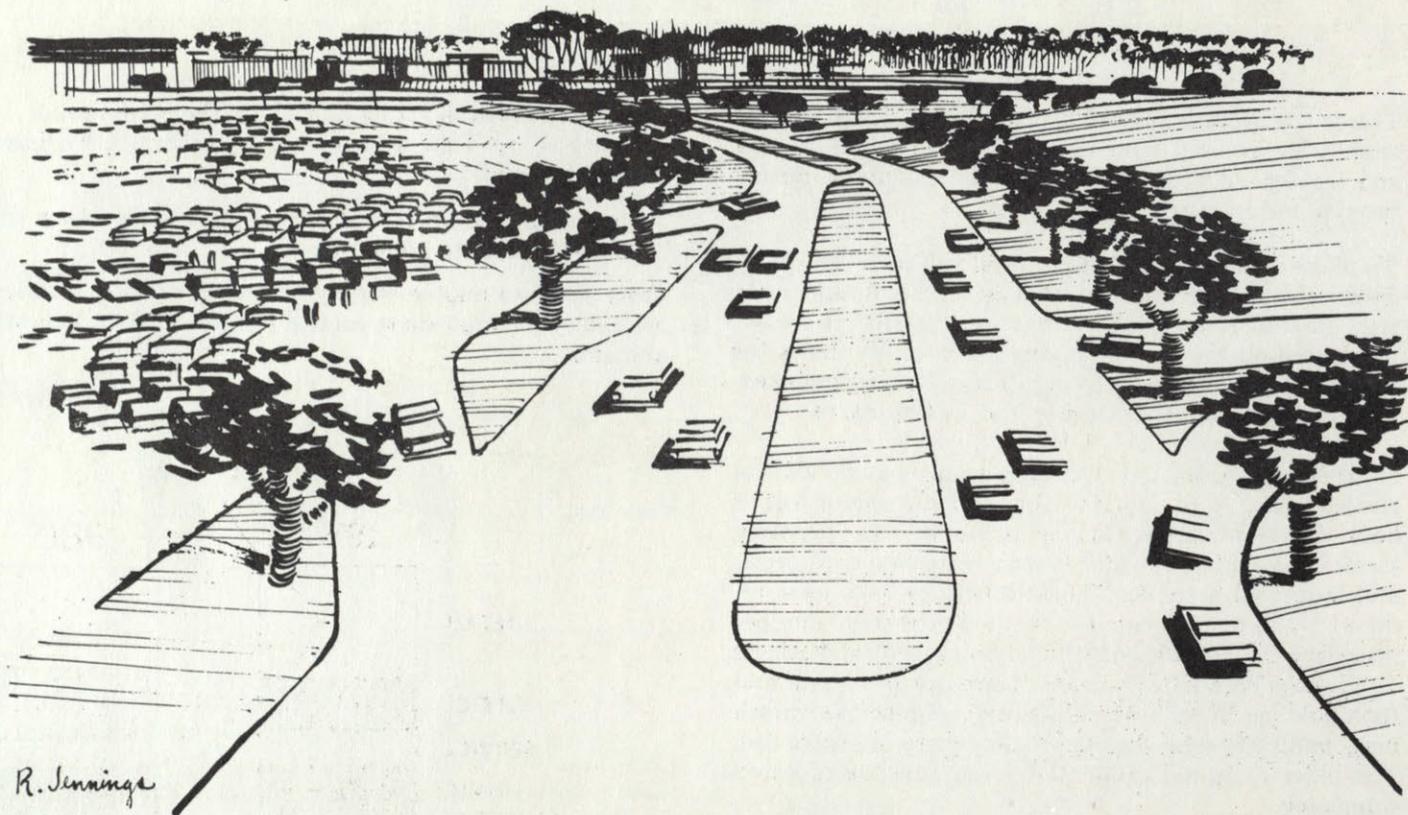
Although it is not anticipated that civic and cultural space will increase appreciably, adequate space is provided in the new civic center for any expansion which might occur. It is possible too that the composition of this space may change and that certain church or fra-

ternal organizations will find it to their advantage to relocate nearer their membership as the central business district expands.

Office space has increased substantially, reflecting the needs of a growing population.

Only such automotive supply and service facilities as are necessary for immediate central business district use will remain.



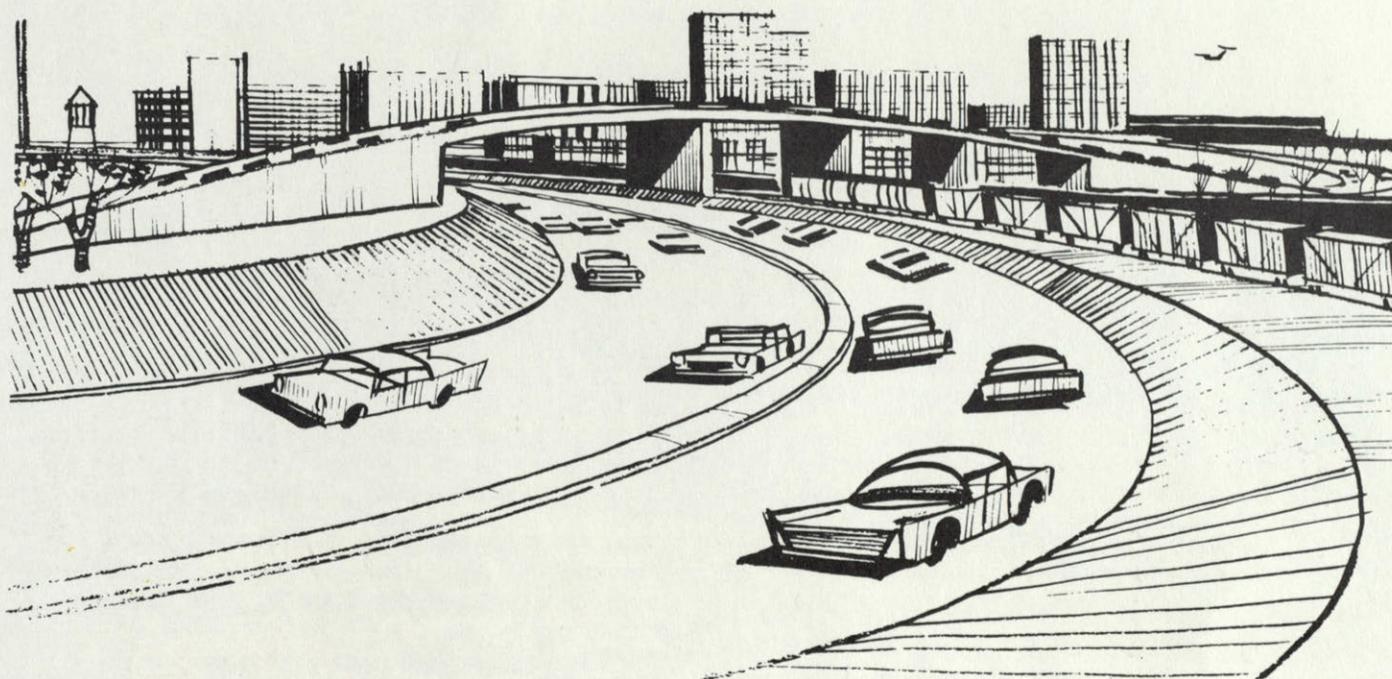


R. Jennings

A peripheral road rings the central business district, gathering traffic from the tributary thoroughfares and funneling it into the perimeter parking areas. These parking areas are related to the component elements of the city in keeping with our goals of maximum compactness and minimum walking distances. This road inter-

connects all parking areas.

Traffic flow on this peripheral road is smooth, efficient, and uninterrupted by through streets. It has been designed as a low speed, limited access road, unencumbered by traffic signals and other restricting devices.



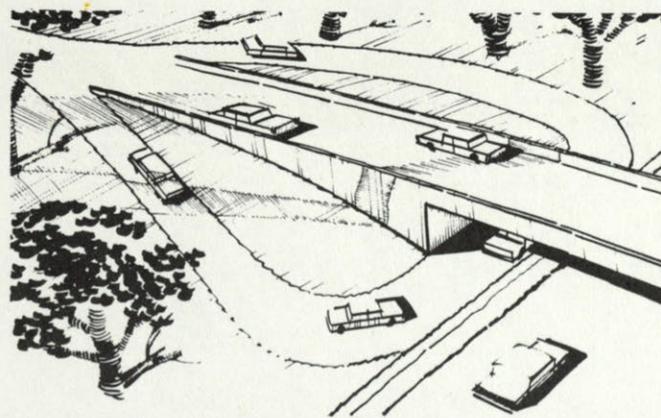
Because the north-south and east-west connectors relieve the central business district of such a tremendous traffic burden, special attention has been paid to them.

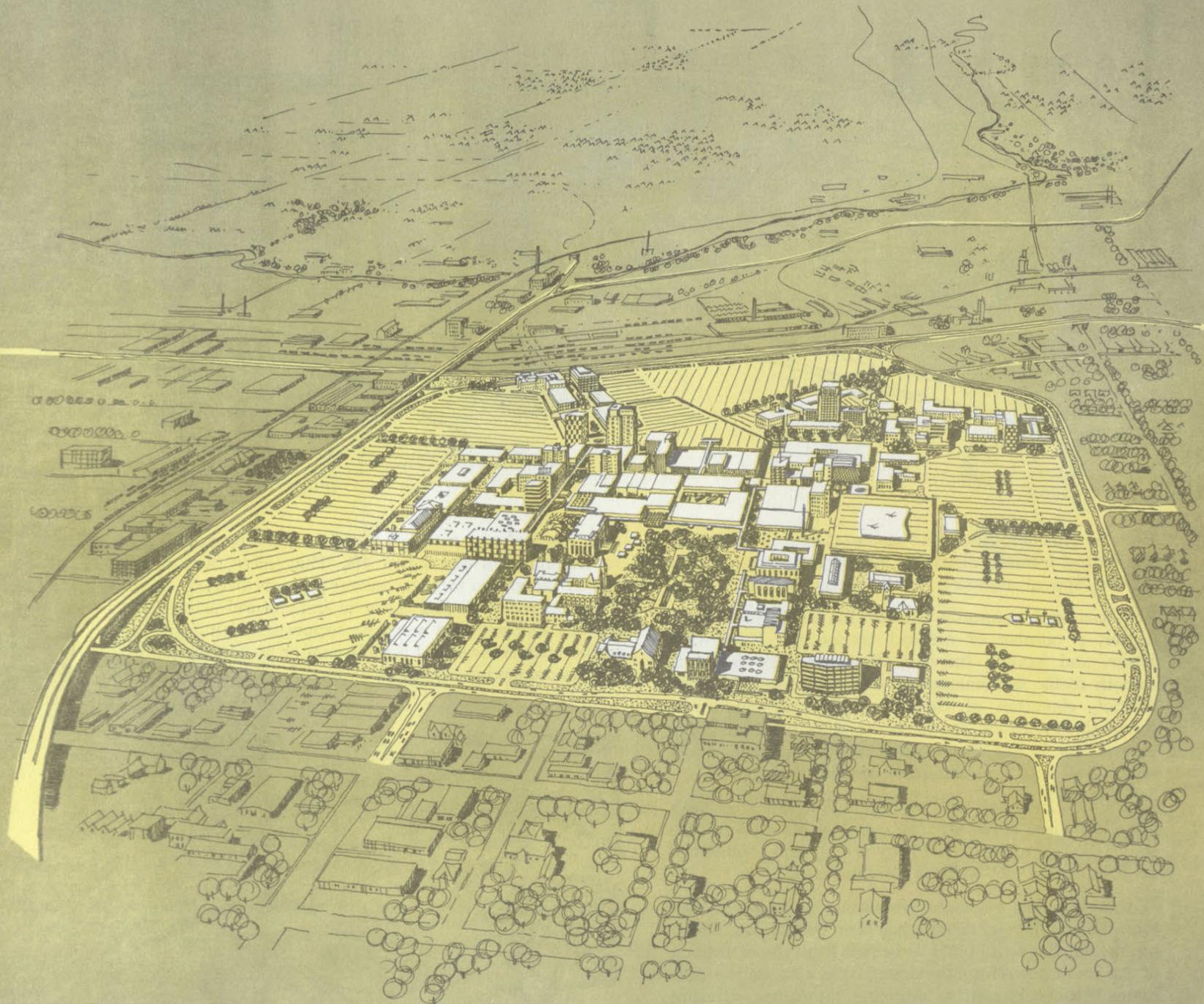
The east-west connector crosses the north-south connector, a number of railroad tracks, the Kalamazoo River, and heavily traveled Westnedge. To facilitate smooth traffic movements entering the central business district, elevation of this east-west thoroughfare is essential. In addition, it will be necessary to install grade separations to facilitate proper traffic movements at street level with a minimum of controls and signals.

Traffic can move at will without undue delay at peak hours on these grade separations. The separations also insure that changing demands by private and commercial vehicles can be met without complications.

Within this new vehicular circulation and storage system, the commercial district has been compacted, allowing the smaller retail units to benefit from the attraction of the more powerful enterprises. This compaction generates better comparative shopping, intensifies activities and values, and shortens walking distances.

The hospital and research facilities contribute actively to Kalamazoo's downtown life. They have been more closely integrated into the central business district. Thus, the core area, including the civic and cultural sector, has become a closely knit mutually supporting unit, freed of traffic interferences and flexible enough to accommodate change demanded by future needs.





## KALAMAZOO 1980

This is your Kalamazoo as it appears in 1980. A bold, imaginative concept that will accommodate the changing needs and demands of a growing city.

You can now approach downtown from any part of the community by private car or by bus, experiencing a minimum of irritating, nerve-frazzling congestion.

From the major city thoroughfares, you can enter the free-moving traffic on the peripheral road surrounding the central business district. Here traffic is slower and controlled with a minimum of signals. As you reach your destination, you move quickly and easily into a conven-

iently located parking stall. From here it is only a few seconds' walk until you enter a downtown of beauty and charm.

Land formerly used by thoroughfares and alleys has now become courts and malls containing additional facilities serving new expanded central business district functions.

You are always pleasantly surprised by the graceful manner in which Bronson Park blends with its new surroundings.

The new vistas and pedestrian environment have now made walking enjoyable.



**LEGEND**



HIGH RISE BUILDINGS



LOW RISE BUILDINGS



PRESENT BUILDINGS

It doesn't take long to see that this new downtown abounds with healthy, economic and physical improvements. There is no unproductive land remaining.

New and old activities alike are employing more people, attracting more shoppers, and accommodating more visitors from distant areas than ever before.

Buildings are compactly grouped but are never oppressively close. Many former streets and alleys once occupied by noisy, smelly cars and trucks have been used to build attractive and striking shops.

Here is a central business district where no pedestrian will ever have to watch the traffic signals, be splashed by rushing automobiles, or listen to policemen's whistles. Only occasionally an ambulance, fire truck, or police car will come through on marked emergency lanes.

You are impressed with the smooth flowing traffic, lack of confusion, and the ease with which each category of

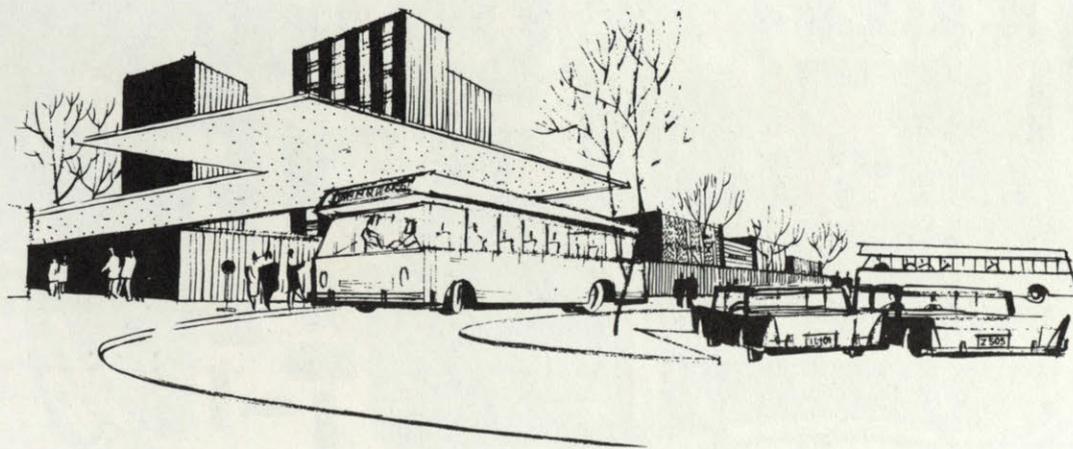
transportation fits into place.

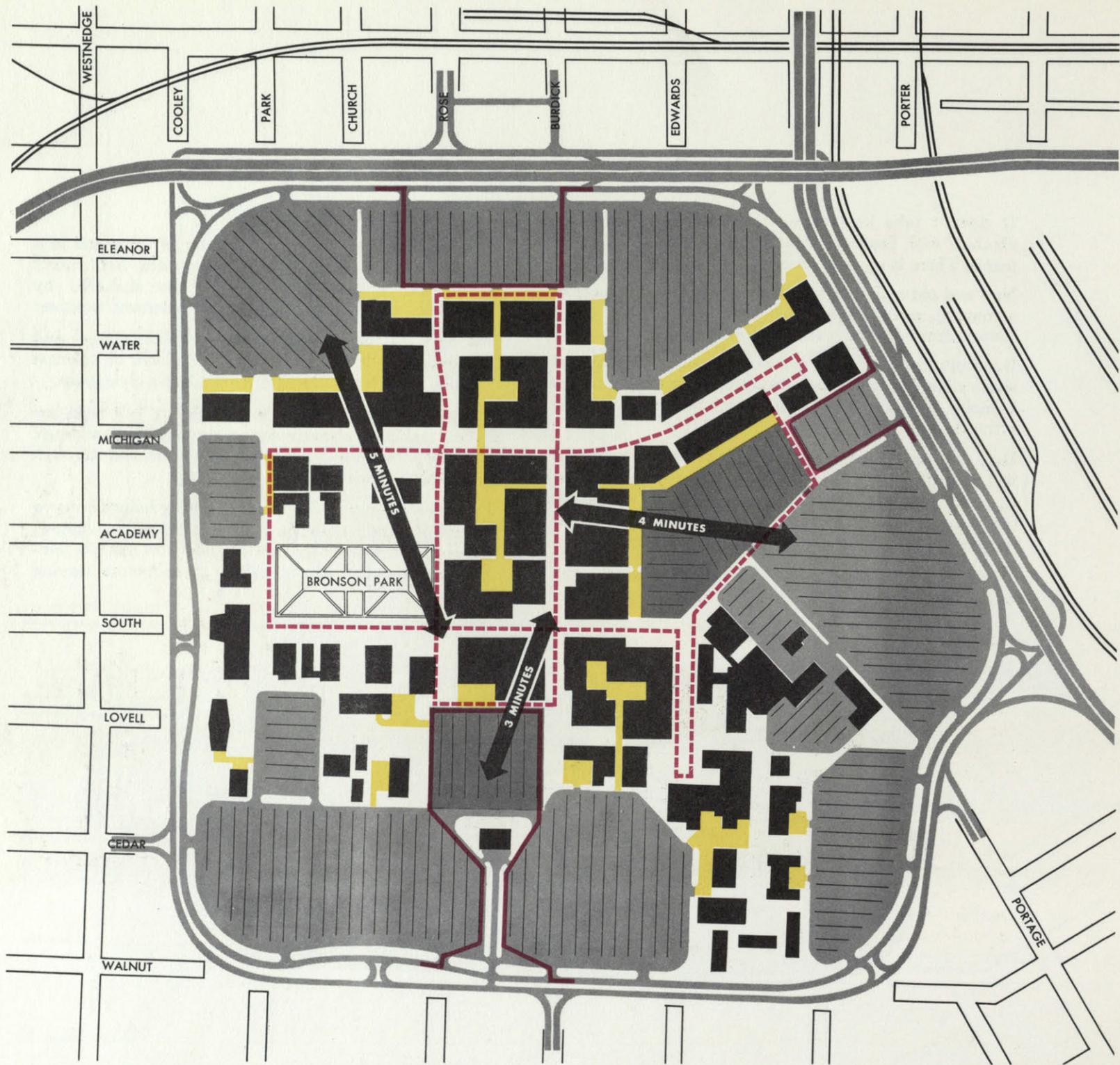
Shoppers can park close to the center of town and in a few seconds be strolling along the malls and courts which were former streets. Walks are sheltered by attractive, colorful canopies against inclement weather.

Not only do the pleasant covered walks, plazas, and landscaped malls bring the people to places of business but they also attract them to Kalamazoo's civic areas.

The pleasant Bronson Park landscaping has been extended and now attractively enhances office buildings, laboratory buildings, and hotels, all reached through comfortably shaded pathways.

Office workers can have lunch in exciting indoor-outdoor restaurants, and late movie patrons can do some window-shopping after the show. Theater goers now feel like joining their friends to have a late snack before leaving for home.





FEET 200 400

 SERVICE ACCESS

 ELECTRIC SHUTTLE BUS ROUTE

 CITY BUS LOOP

 WALKING TIME

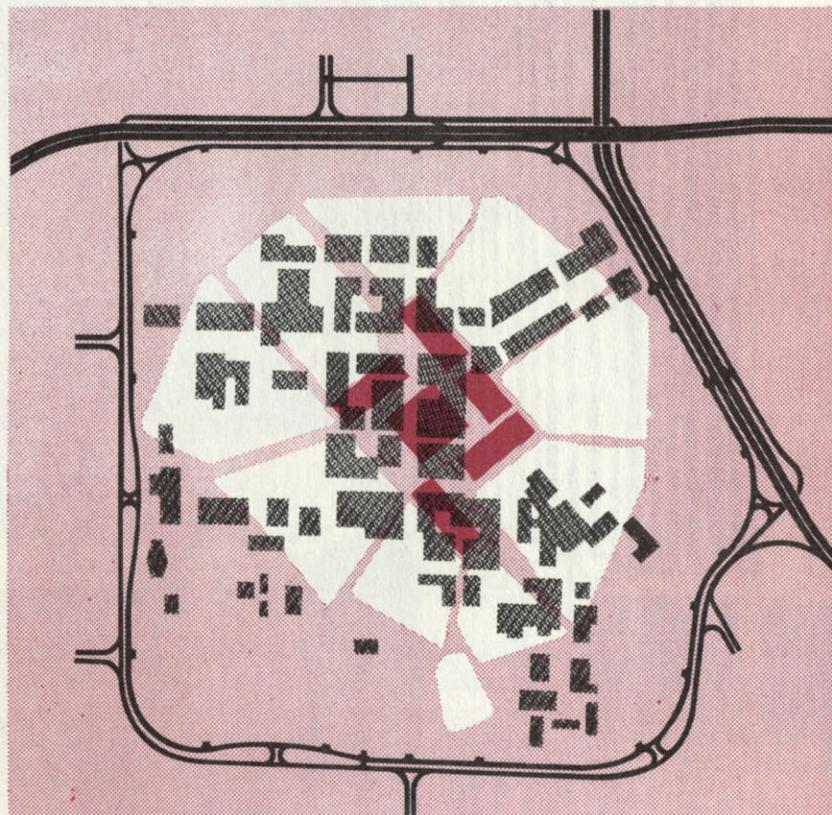
It is not difficult to walk from one part of downtown to another—three, four, maybe five minutes at the most—even this time seems short because of the beautiful, pleasant environment and the excitement and diversions offered by the new surroundings.

For the handicapped or tired a frequently scheduled service of a small shuttle bus is maintained throughout the day. Rides are free and the gaily colored cars touch most parts of the downtown.

Our new plan integrates the central business district with the thoroughfare system of the region. Outlying areas have easy access at all times. The circulation system makes it possible for private cars to enter readily and for all public transportation to operate to full efficiency.

Buses can enter and leave at many points on pre-determined routes which best serve the changing public needs. The multitude of trucks and other service traffic approaches the central business district on specially designated lanes leading to pleasantly screened service yards. Only three interior blocks find it necessary to receive service across a pedestrian area. These are served when pedestrian use of the area is light—perhaps at night or early morning. Carefully located kiosks further help to reduce the visual disturbance of service vehicles that must enter during the day.

You notice that all of this new downtown Kalamazoo compares favorably with the most successful regional shopping centers—shopping centers where people frequently walk even greater distances than in Kalamazoo's new downtown area without complaint and under less favorable conditions.



NORTHLAND REGIONAL SHOPPING CENTER - RED





This busy pedestrian scene was formerly Burdick Street. Once it was crowded with cars, trucks, and buses. Now its shops enjoy the benefit of unimpeded pedestrian exposure. Stores formerly separated by streams of onrushing traffic can all be visited easily and safely by the shopper.

You can recognize the telephone building in the far background. Walking leisurely south, you notice that many of the stores are new, others have been remodeled or enlarged.

People can now stroll from store to store even during inclement weather without getting wet.

Some downtown visitors can be seen crossing Burdick

Mall through the glassed-in overpass connecting with the upper level of one of the parking decks.

The shopper's attention is held by ever-changing displays and vistas. Office workers enjoy a leisurely lunch or coffee break amidst flowered planting boxes and trees. Husbands relax, keeping an eye on the children while their wives shop in nearby stores. The little electric shuttle moves safely through the courts and malls, stopping occasionally to pick up a tired shopper.

Even now, plans are being made to transform this already beautiful Burdick Mall into a year-around roofed and air conditioned shopping plaza.

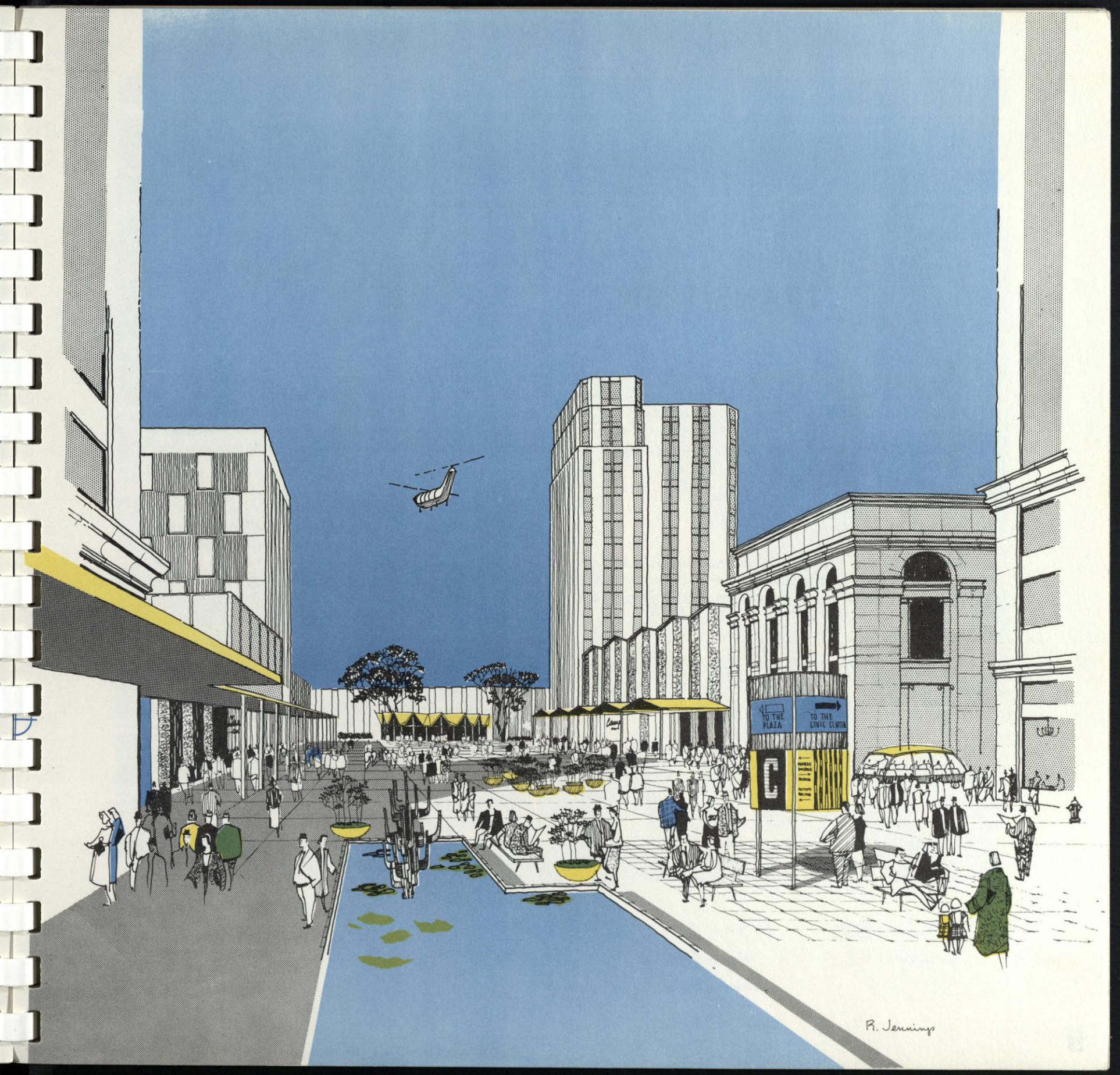
← BURDICK MALL

Every day you find surprises in this new Kalamazoo. A new piece of sculpture has been placed, a new traveling exhibit opened; or perhaps a group of students are holding outdoor painting classes while others study the natural sciences in outdoor surroundings.

Even in the financial district you sense the enthusiasm of prominent business leaders for their new downtown. The banks seem to invite you in with their wide glass entrances framed by carefully nurtured evergreens and flowering shrubs. Here and there new buildings are under construction in a pattern of continual growth and improvements.



MICHIGAN MALL →



R. Jennings

## TRANSITION

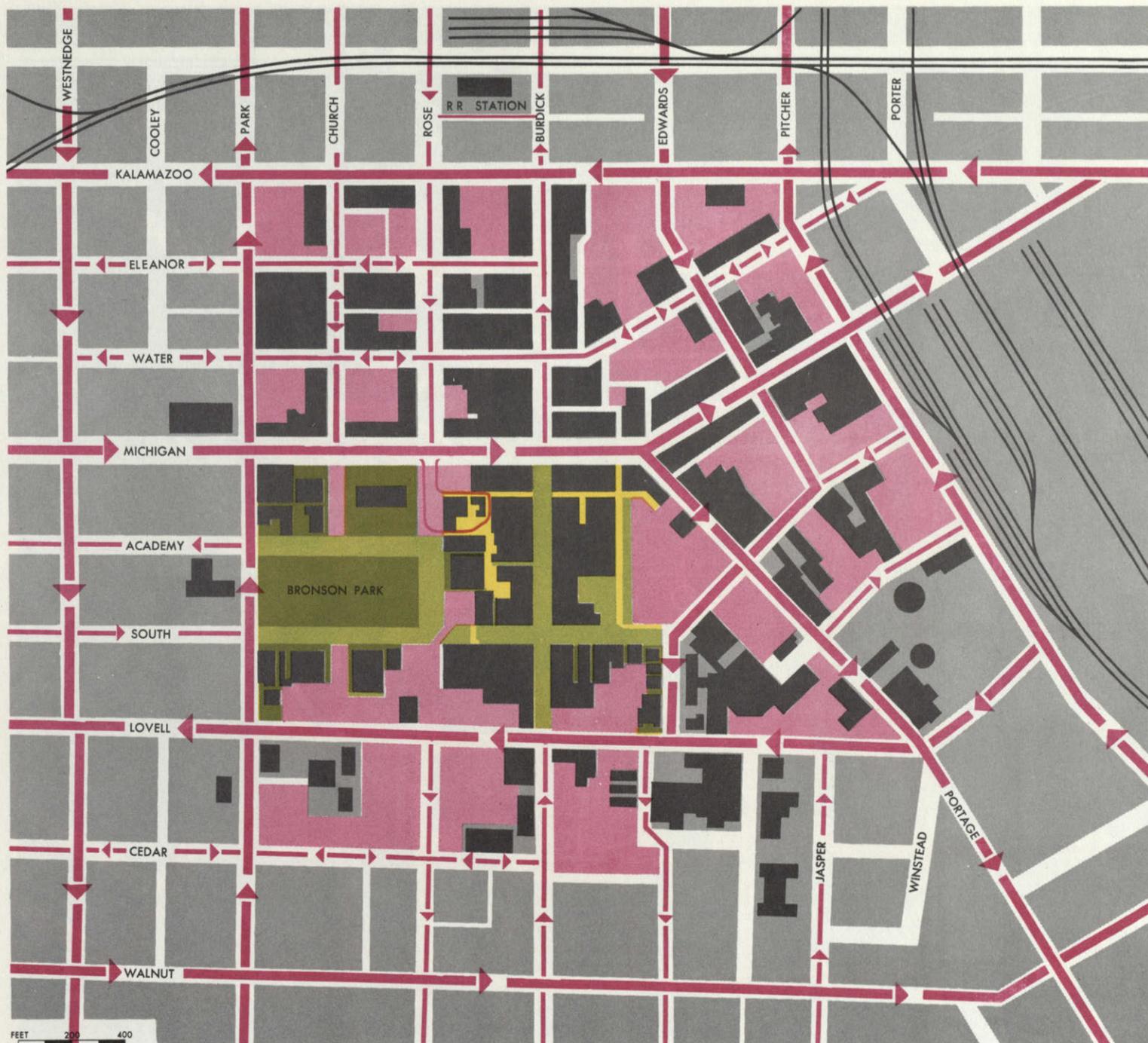
The new Kalamazoo will not appear by magic over night—it will take much detailed planning and careful attention to the problems that arise. A concerted effort will be necessary on the part of many to adjust themselves properly to this new environment, aligning individual desires with the community effort.

### FIRST STAGE

Some steps, however, can be taken immediately to initiate our long range program. One of these is the inauguration of a one-way traffic loop around the downtown nucleus,

utilizing Michigan, Portage, Lovell and Park Street. Most of the area inside this loop will be devoted to pedestrian use for the first time in Kalamazoo's modern history. The one-way traffic pattern will not interfere or disrupt any present activities—adjustments will be minor.

Notice that there are already many existing parking facilities on the inside edge of this traffic loop which have been supplemented with portions of former street rights-of-way. From these parking lots the pedestrian can enter directly the interior of downtown without encountering further vehicular traffic. Only service vehicles will be allowed to penetrate further into the interior, and then only on carefully predetermined routes.



### LEGEND

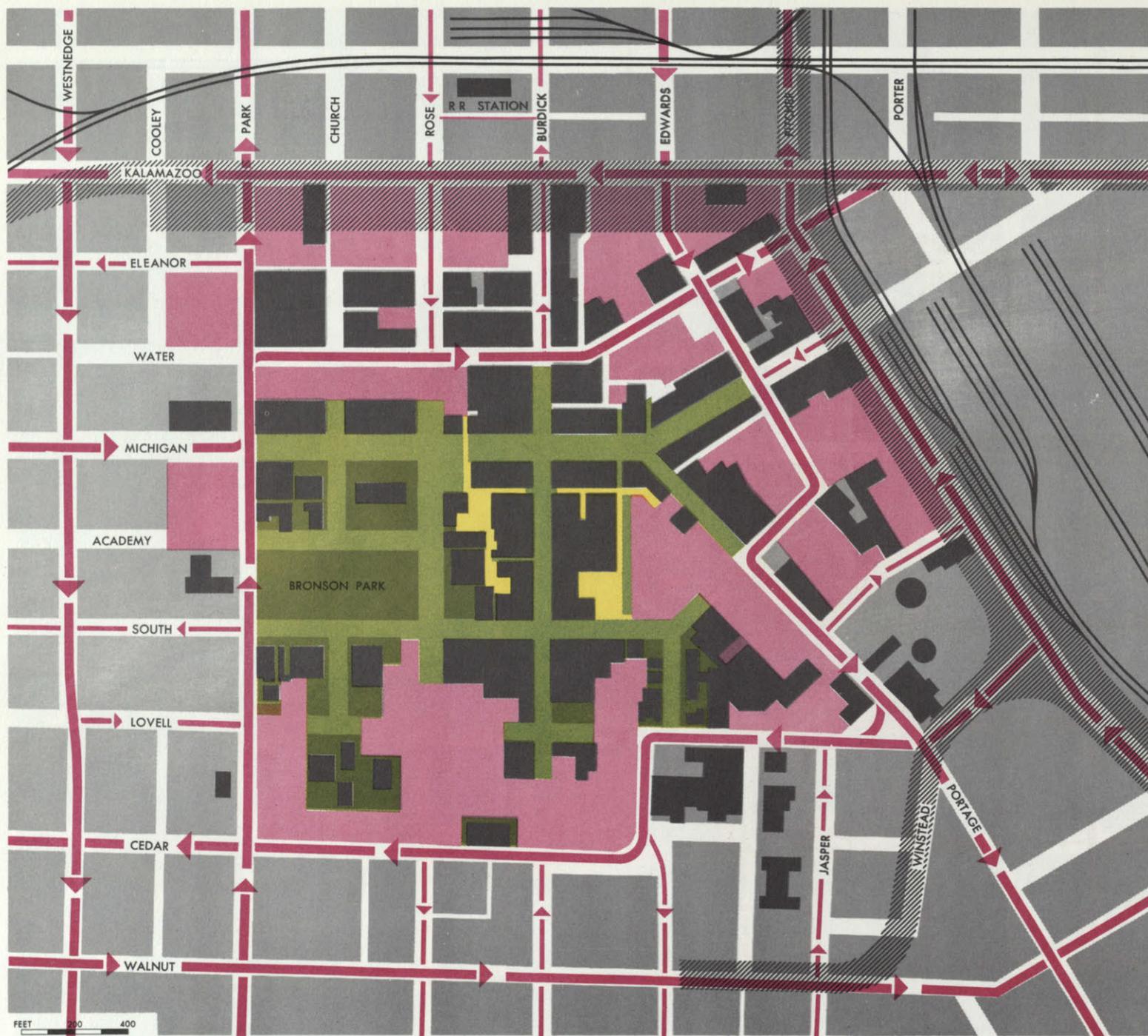
TRAFFIC FLOW

PARKING

BUILDINGS

PEDESTRIAN AREA

SERVICE ACCESS



### LEGEND

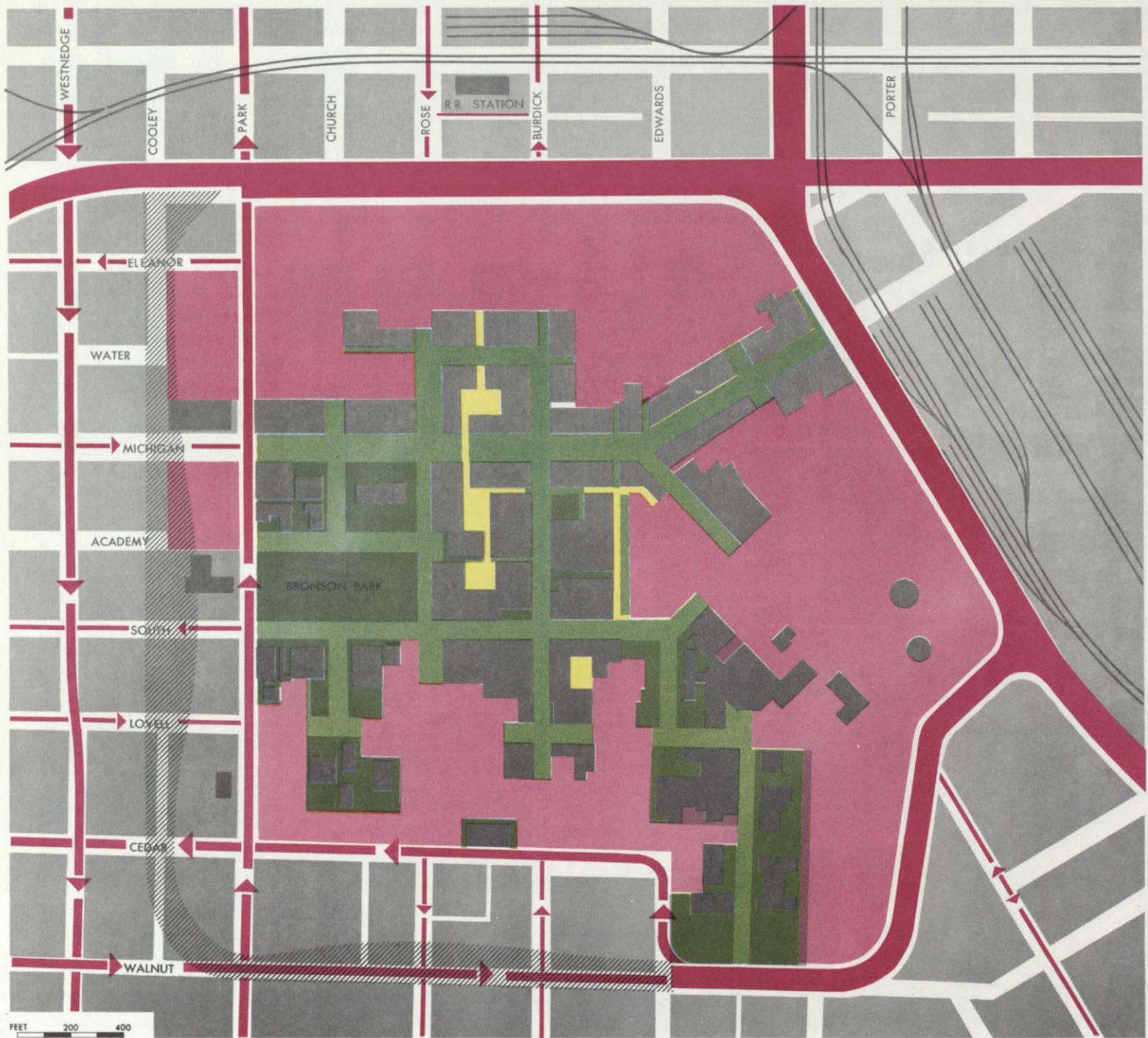
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|---|--------------|---|----------------------|
|  | TRAFFIC FLOW |  | PEDESTRIAN AREA      |
|  | PARKING      |  | SERVICE ACCESS       |
|  | BUILDINGS    |  | ACQUIRE RIGHT-OF-WAY |

## **SECOND STAGE**

By now, the one-way perimeter road has been moved outward, and the pedestrian area enlarged considerably. New buildings are beginning to spring up in many locations formerly considered unproductive. Business activity and property values are on the increase. Owners of light industrial enterprises, warehouses, and distribution centers formerly located on the fringe of downtown now have found it more profitable and efficient to move out to new locations. Here they find more operating room, more economical storage, and more space for the horizontal

expansion needed to keep pace with their growing business volume. The property vacated by these fringe uses is now being used for functions more closely related to central business district activities.

Concurrently, rights of way are being acquired for construction of the north-south and east-west connectors. Property acquisition for the peripheral loop road has also been started.



### LEGEND

- |  |              |  |                 |  |                        |
|--|--------------|--|-----------------|--|------------------------|
|  | TRAFFIC FLOW |  | PEDESTRIAN AREA |  | ACQUIRE RIGHT-OF-WAY   |
|  | PARKING      |  | SERVICE ACCESS  |  | THOROUGHFARE COMPLETED |
|  | BUILDINGS    |  |                 |  |                        |

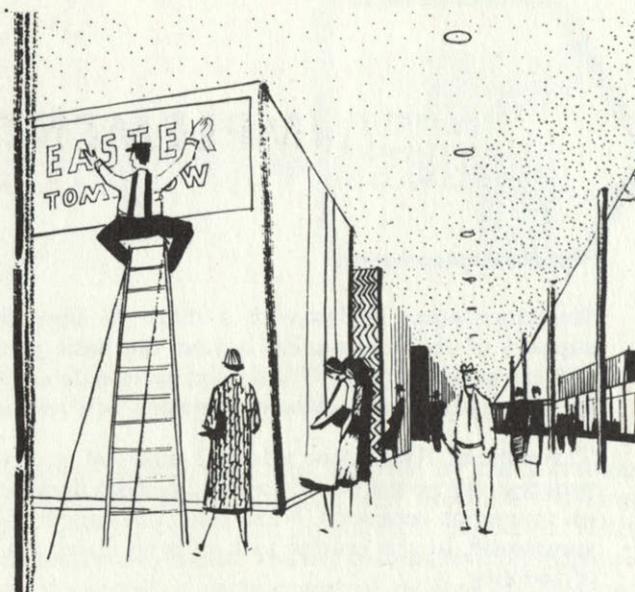
### THIRD STAGE

Now the north-south, east-west connectors have been completed—sections of the peripheral road are in operation and the small amount remaining in the south and west portion is under construction.

More and more merchants, businessmen, and property owners are realizing a share in the general success of the revitalized downtown. Moves to new quarters are being completed—long delayed plans for construction of new buildings are being realized, and remodeling and enlarging of shops is visible everywhere.

Parking facilities have been expanded easily and without inconvenience to the downtown operation. Here, as elsewhere, trees have been planted to bring shade. Landscaped islands with beautiful flowers reintroduce human scale.

Kalamazoo's downtown has acquired for the community a reputation of being a city of trees and flowers. Downtown merchants are scheduling promotional events regularly—we can see one of them changing his window display now to make room for the next gala event.



The transition to this beautiful and practical downtown has taken place gradually over the years—it will be only a short time until we have brought total realization to our long range concept of downtown Kalamazoo.

By careful planning and proper implementation we have seen our philosophy and goals, established many years ago, become realities.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation begins with a drive to align the full support of the community behind the basic goals and objectives of the plan. Ultimately, success depends upon the thoughtful and active cooperation of every citizen.

Throughout Kalamazoo's long history of growth and progress, the power of civic action has been demonstrated on numerous occasions. Now, this civic support is to be summoned to the crucial task of revitalizing the heart of the city.

Following formal presentation of the plan, newspaper, radio, and television publicity will give it increased news value. Discussions of the plan will furnish a timely theme for programs held by Kalamazoo's many civic associations and service clubs. No avenue of public information and discussion should be overlooked in this activation of community support.

A permanent citizen's committee should be formed to provide continuous public leadership in carrying out the plan. The committee must be large enough to be representative, small enough to be decisive. It should include representatives from groups such as the Downtown Kalamazoo Planning Committee, the Downtown Merchant's Association, and civic organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce. It should include not only business interests but members of local college faculties as well as school and church leaders.

With such a membership drawn from all walks of city life, the committee can weld together public opinion and resources to assist municipal agencies and encourage private investment.

The citizen's committee will be both sounding board and spokesman—sparkplug and generator.

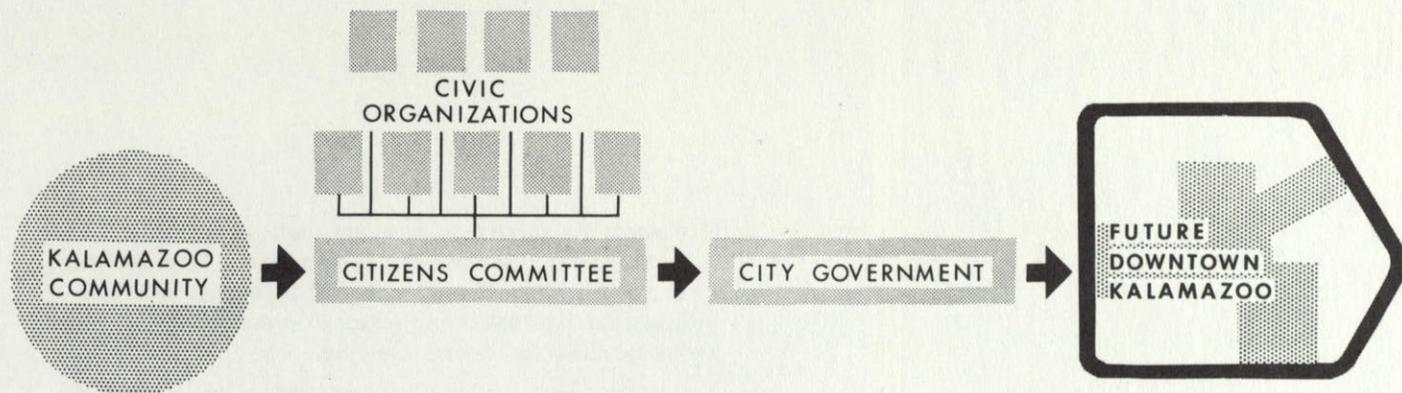
To insure widespread community participation, it would be desirable to have rotating membership in the group. However, despite its changing membership, the committee and its work should be organized on a permanent basis.

Presentation of the plan to city government for official adoption will constitute the first major undertaking of the newly formed citizen's committee.

Only after the plan achieves official status as a statement of public policy, can a revitalized downtown Kalamazoo become a reality. When the city has adopted the fundamental elements of the plan as official planning goals, accomplishment of the plan's objectives can proceed most effectively through existing agencies of city government.

The plan will coordinate and amplify present policies related to downtown planning. It will insure that the maximum benefits will be derived from all city central business district planning expenditures. It will allow local government and business leaders to coordinate their public and private programs into a single effort focused on specific goals for downtown Kalamazoo.

Working hand in hand with the citizen's committee, existing agencies can extend and modify their present activities to include the work programs needed for downtown revitalization. Kalamazoo's city government has already acquired a depth of experience in urban planning, traffic management, and municipal parking operations.



As work on the plan proceeds, some expansion of Kalamazoo's public agencies may be needed to absorb work loads generated by detailed studies. However, present staffs should be able to absorb the additional planning work during the very early phases of implementation.

Eventually some permanent source of financing may be needed. This need could be met by a number of alternatives which Kalamazoo has employed in the past.

One would be the creation of a special downtown assessment district, similar to that used previously for municipal parking lot development. Another method would be the allocation of a portion of city parking revenues to downtown planning. A selection of these or other alternatives would be premature now. The fact that only modest amounts over and above presently budgeted expenses are required, deserves major emphasis.

When detailed planning and negotiation for specific improvements are completed, actual development of new facilities can begin within the framework of the broad plan. A major portion of the cost of these facilities will be borne by private investment, either directly or indirectly.

Private interests will renovate existing commercial struc-

tures and develop new ones. Spurred by the investment opportunities inherent in the new downtown environment, private capital can invest with confidence. Within this favorable climate, healthy competitive pressures can be regenerated in many marginal sections of the central business district. These natural competitive pressures for space, linked with strong business representation in downtown locations, will lead to new property value levels and new standards of commercial operations.

As a start to the creation of a new downtown economic environment, legal and planning work should begin immediately on the closing of certain downtown streets; on creation of additional open areas for the development of parking lots. The cost of these initial steps would be small. In all probability, they could be easily financed from existing public sources, supplemented by contributions from civic groups.

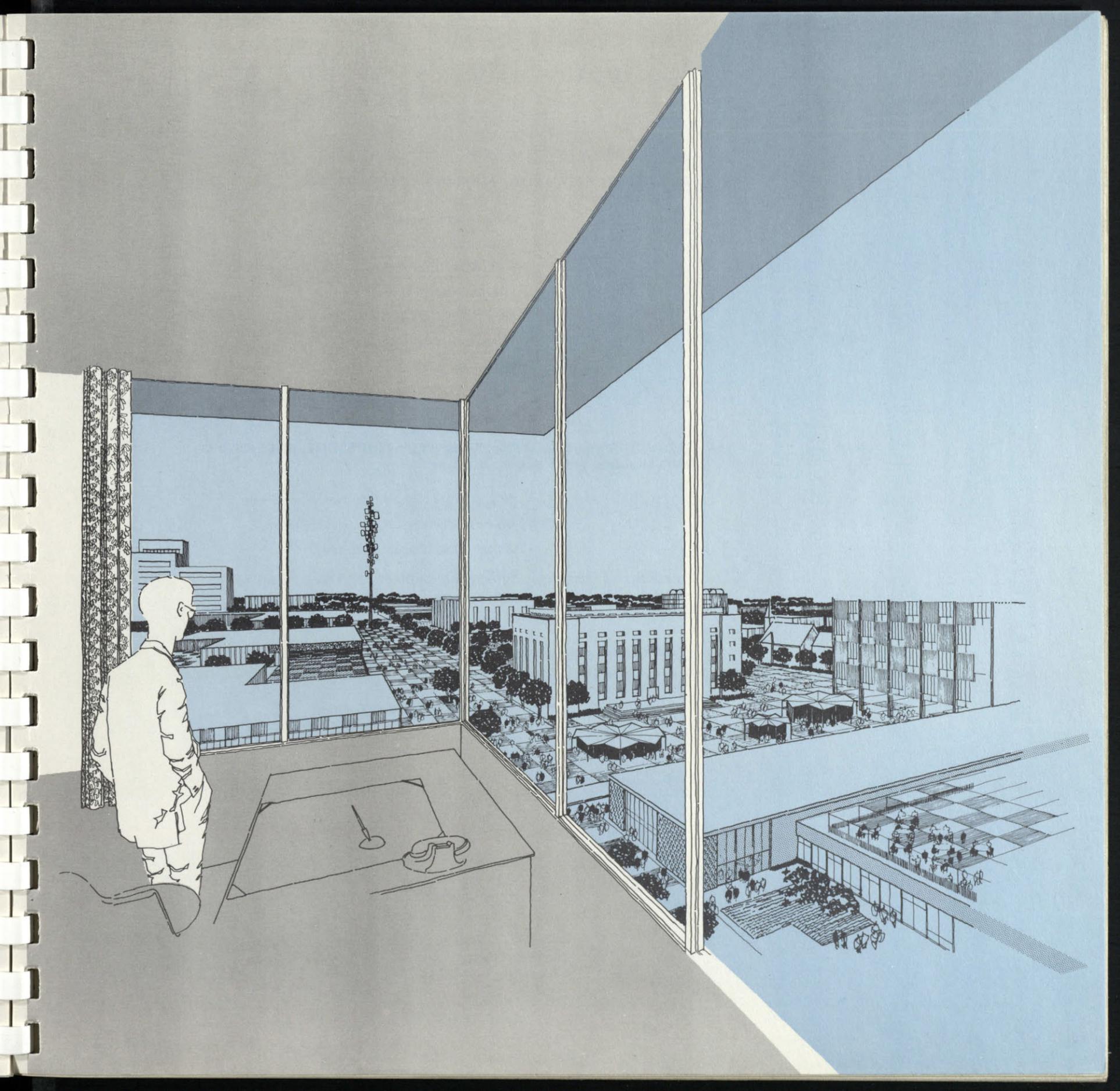
Thus, the first and perhaps the hardest step toward achieving the plan can be taken with only a modest investment, coupled with civic determination. These two ingredients, plus a strong public faith in the future, can ignite the chain reaction of planning that will restore the regional dominance of downtown Kalamazoo.



Downtown Kalamazoo is now the undisputed center of a rich, diversified trade region. As you glance over Bronson Park and Michigan Plaza bustling with activity, you realize with satisfaction that twenty years of community teamwork and cooperation has been successful.

Yes, you had your doubts when you were called upon several years ago to help bring about an ambitious program of downtown revitalization. Now these doubts have been dispelled as you find a pleasant city, attracting more new ventures than ever, and holding promise for all.

OVERLOOKING BRONSON PARK →



**DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO PLANNING COMMITTEE, INC.**

GARRET VAN HAAFTEN, Chairman  
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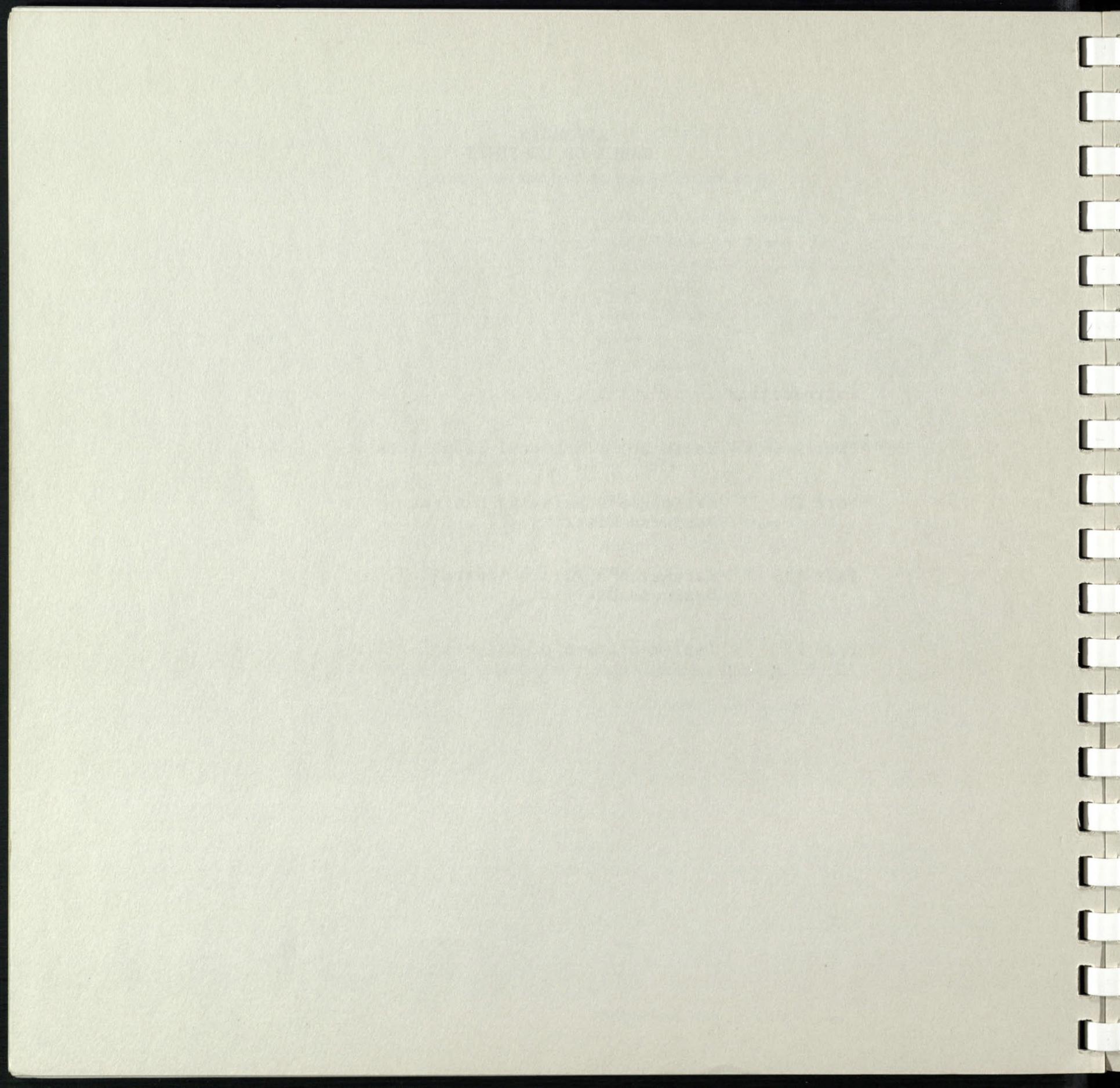
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## INTRODUCTION

The foregoing has shown by words and graphics what we must strive for in Kalamazoo's future. However, like an iceberg, of which the major part forms a broad hidden base under water, so must there be a broad factual base, not always visible, to substantiate any valid master plan.

We must not only excite and stimulate the imagination but must thoroughly and objectively justify the plan. Thus, in the following pages, we have abstracted and summarized some of the multitude of detailed background elements which contributed to our revitalization plan for downtown Kalamazoo.

## PART I

### KALAMAZOO'S REGIONAL TRADE AREA

#### Boundaries

The central business district is the heart of the region as well as the core of the city. Any study of it must take place within a regional context. The most meaningful measure of Kalamazoo's area impact is the central business district's regional trade area (see map, page 9). It is estimated that retail activities in downtown Kalamazoo derive the largest part of their volume from within this regional trade area. In addition, the growth of economic activities, other than retailing, in the central business district are directly and indirectly related to the growth and pattern of Kalamazoo's regional tributary area.

The Kalamazoo regional trade area boundaries reflect the competitive interplay of Kalamazoo's downtown drawing power with that of competing urban centers such as Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, and South Bend. The latest available information indicates that Kalamazoo has been able to keep abreast of population and retail trends in these other major centers. In view of the vigorous community programs now contemplated, it is reasonable to assume that Kalamazoo and its central business district will be able to maintain their present position relative to competitive, economic focal points.

As indicated earlier, other basic factors also influence the extent and shape of Kalamazoo's regional trade area. These include:

- a. Access characteristics of Kalamazoo and its hinterland.
- b. The pattern of residential settlement surrounding Kalamazoo.
- c. Location of natural and man-made barriers such as railroads, rivers, and industrial belts that tend to deflect and channel economic circulation within the region.

In the final delimitation of the trade area the factors described above were integrated with the findings of other Kalamazoo regional studies which have touched on the problem of trade area definition. Two of these of particular importance are: Resources for Industry in Kalamazoo by the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Community Research, 1950 and the Major Thoroughfare Plan for Kalamazoo and Environs by the Kalamazoo City Planning Commission, 1950

### Regional Population Growth

Population estimates and projections were prepared as a part of our basic planning research. These were formulated from source materials contained in the latest available census publications coupled with local planning studies.

Data taken from these source materials and integrated into a regional framework yield an estimated regional trade area population of roughly 252,000 by 1960. This is expected to increase to approximately 283,000 by 1965; 314,000 by 1970, and 344,000 by 1980. The estimated growth for future years reflects a continuation of the healthy expansion and diversification trends which have been apparent in Kalamazoo's economic base during recent years.

Throughout the period covered by these projections, it is recognized that the regional economy may experience temporary setbacks. However, over the long run, studies indicate a sound base for anticipating continued population expansion.

Census data and other planning studies reveal that the pattern of future population growth will be concentrated within the primary zone of Kalamazoo's regional trade area. Thus, in the future, trade area population will experience its greatest increase in those sections of the trade area nearest the central business district, where the impact of downtown retail facilities is strongest.

Despite a concentration of growth in the primary zone population, increases in the secondary, or outer zone of the trade area will be steady and substantial during the coming years. Yet, for at least two or three more decades, many portions of the secondary zone will retain sectors of rural settlement and rural economic activity.

Estimates of out-of-town students attending Kalamazoo's three colleges, Western Michigan, Kalamazoo, and Nazareth, are included in the population estimates for Kalamazoo's tributary trade area. The Upjohn population study estimates the number of out-of-town students residing in Kalamazoo at approximately 6,800 in 1960; 9,400 in 1965; 12,000 in 1970; and 14,600 in 1975.

Although the number of out-of-town students is small relative to the trade area total, adjustments have been made within our analysis to reflect the special growth rates and expenditure patterns which characterize this element of the overall trade area population.

#### Trade Area Potential for Key CBD Retail Facilities

Based on latest available census information, coupled with data derived from consumer income and expenditure studies, estimated retail expenditure patterns for Kalamazoo trade area residents were prepared. In the patterns calculated, estimates were made of the per capita trade area expenditures for typical central business district retail establishments.

In addition to the annual per capita expenditures estimated for Kalamazoo's resident population, special patterns were calculated for resident, out-of-town college students. Combining these, the central business district's share of the total retail trade was derived by a series of computations which took into account significant factors such as the pattern of population growth and retail development within the Kalamazoo region.

Finally, the estimates of volumes available to central business district facilities were translated into estimates of downtown area requirements, using the best information available concerning retail operating and planning standards. These derived estimates of area requirements are basic to the recommendations contained in the plan for Kalamazoo's future downtown.

#### Regional Patterns of Economic Activity

As indicated above, regional patterns of economic activity were thoroughly analyzed to determine the potential future role of Kalamazoo's downtown. A summary of the findings is appropriate here.

Briefly, these studies of economic location trends within the Kalamazoo regional trade area indicated a steady erosion of the central business district's dominant position. In today's city most industrial, warehousing, wholesale, and heavy distribution activities are located outside the core area. Some notable exceptions to this general trend do exist and, oftentimes, large, strategically located portions of central business districts are devoted to activities customarily not appropriate in downtown locations. Downtown land values in many cities have not yet reached levels that encourage displacement of these relatively low intensity and less desirable downtown land uses. While economic forces in the Kalamazoo region have not yet brought about relocation of these less desirable activities, some highly desirable central business district functions have, unfortunately, developed strong suburban locational trends.

Census materials were examined to enable us to measure and analyze these trends. This data was supplemented by extensive field surveys of facilities in downtown Kalamazoo and in outlying sections of the trade area. The surveys concentrated on retail facilities since this key segment of the central business district's economic structure has been strongly affected by adverse trends in recent years.

Examination of the data gathered indicated several strong convenience shopping centers in suburban Kalamazoo. These include the relatively large Cork Lane Shopping Center; Eastwood Shopping Center; a strip commercial district centered on Portage Street and Pattington Road; the Parchment retail center; and an older business district located around the intersection of Portage Street and Washington Avenue, about a mile southeast of Kalamazoo's downtown core.

In addition, a strong array of convenience retail facilities, coupled with some comparison shopping outlets, operates in the town of Three Rivers, located in the southeastern corner of Kalamazoo's regional trade area.

Perhaps the suburban retail facility having most significance for downtown Kalamazoo is the new Sears & Roebuck store and automobile center located at Crosstown Parkway and South Burdick Street. These Sears' units, with combined areas of roughly 125,000 square feet, could evolve as the nucleus of an important business district. This

district would introduce a strong competitive threat to downtown retail operations. Already indications are that comparison shopping facilities will tend to cluster around the Sears' store. With this strong establishment as its core, a major commercial cluster in this location could seriously affect the dominant position of Kalamazoo's central business district.

In addition to the increase in important outlying retail facilities, other economic activities, particularly office and professional buildings, are springing up in Kalamazoo's suburbs. Usually the development of these facilities is closely related to nearby suburban retail centers. Thus, the suburban economic focal points, like downtown Kalamazoo, have retail activities at their cores, surrounded by other activities operating in the economic field generated by the retail operation.

#### The Function and Abilities of the Central Business District

In the face of strong suburban trends in the Kalamazoo region, the central business district's position is threatened unless corrective measures are undertaken immediately. Within the central district of a growing city such as Kalamazoo, two more or less opposing forces are at work, which influence the characteristics of downtown retail businesses.

On one hand, there is the sprawling growth of residential suburbs and accompanying retail facilities. These facilities, which develop in response to new settlement patterns, tend to drain off volumes from central business district retail outlets. This is particularly so for those stores which feature convenience-oriented merchandise lines such as foods, drugs, and hardware.

On the other hand, in a growing city, expansion of the regional market base, resulting from over-all population growth, usually produces increased demand factors for specialized retail outlets. These specialized outlets, particularly comparison shopping facilities, can usually serve the total urban region most effectively from a central business district location - provided the economic environment of the central business district is a healthy one.

Consequently, over a period of time, retail facilities in the central business district of a growing urban area will normally change character. Convenience-oriented retail outlets serving segments of the tributary trade area will migrate from the central business district to suburban locations. As part of the same process, there should be a trend toward the concentration of a variety of retail outlets within the central business district to service the specialized shopping needs of the entire trade area.

Unfortunately, in Kalamazoo, there is little indication that the migration of less specialized retail outlets from downtown is even partially being counteracted by a growing concentration of these very important more specialized activities. Thus, in light of present trends, it seems reasonable to assume that the central business district's share of over-all trade area expenditures will probably decline within the foreseeable future. This is possible even though in terms of absolute volume, downtown facilities should be able to capitalize to a limited extent on the substantial growth anticipated for the Kalamazoo trade area at large.

Certainly a major factor in determining the central business district's ability to achieve a satisfactory competitive balance with other trade area retail facilities will be the presence of major retail units serving as anchors and prime patronage generators. The competitive effectiveness of almost all types of business clusters - central business districts as well as shopping centers - is closely related to the type of major tenant or key outlet occupying the dominant position within the commercial cluster.

For central business districts like Kalamazoo's, strong aggressive department stores, complemented by a representative array of specialty shopping facilities, form the essential retail nucleus for development of the over-all drawing power needed to withstand the competitive pressures of suburban developments. This is particularly significant when we consider that, dependent upon the success of the new nearby Sears' branch, competitors of Sears might also undertake suburban developments which certainly would weaken the position of Kalamazoo's central business district retail facilities.

Therefore, all plans for improving the economic environment of Kalamazoo's central business district should emphasize the development of strong comparison shopping anchors as basic elements of the central business district retail structure.

## PART II

### KALAMAZOO'S EXISTING CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

As a basic step in our study of the Kalamazoo central business district, we prepared an inventory of existing land uses and an evaluation of building condition and business operation for each individual establishment.

This inventory and evaluation had four purposes:

1. It provided a method for physical delimitation of the existing central business district.
2. It provided planning data used to project future land requirements.
3. It provided a graphic picture of the growth characteristics in the major business district.
4. It provided detailed data needed to insure a minimum of demolition within the framework of the long range plan.

The method followed in surveying downtown Kalamazoo utilized a comprehensive classification list which allowed each use found in the central business district to be coded. This list, shown in Table I, defines sixty-five business classifications, arranged in eighteen major groupings. For the purpose of physical planning, these eighteen groupings were further reduced to nine, as follows:

R - Retail Trade - Food, Clothing, Household,  
Automotive, Variety, Miscellaneous

S - Service Trade

O - Office - Financial, Headquarters Offices,  
General Offices

P - Parking

T - Transportation Terminals

L - Hotels

D - Transient and Permanent Residences

U - Public and Organizational

X - Industrial, Wholesale and Vacancy

Rating the physical condition of downtown facilities was very difficult. However, a preliminary inspection established a rating range from poor to excellent. In the detailed survey which then followed, each facility was rated by one of four standards - excellent, good, fair, and poor. Rating criteria took into account building age, condition, arrangement, and maintenance. For background data, the business condition of each retail establishment operating in downtown facilities was also rated. The range again was established by preliminary inspection, and a standard of excellent, good, fair, or poor applied in each case. Factors taken into account included appearance and quality of merchandise, quality of fixtures, and pedestrian circulation during business hours.

To record the inventory observations, a detailed plan was prepared of each block. On these plans was entered data obtained by personal inspection of each piece of property in the entire downtown area. Careful measurements made from these maps, combined with the recorded data, were then used to physically delimit the functional area of the present downtown for planning purposes.

The delimitation technique involved the use of three measurement indexes. These were:

Total Height Index - The total amount of floor space within the block property line, divided by the area of the block.

Central Business District Height Index - The total floor space devoted to central business district use within the block property line, divided by the total area of the block.

Central Business District Intensity Index - The ratio of central business district use floor space to total central business district floor space.

TABLE I  
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT USE CLASSIFICATIONS  
FOR PHYSICAL PLANNING

FOOD

Restaurant  
Supermarket  
General Food  
Food Specialty  
Delicatessen and Ice Cream  
Parlor  
Package Store  
Bars

CLOTHING

Women's Clothing  
Men's Clothing  
Family Clothing  
Clothing Specialty  
General Shoe Store  
Men's and Women's Clothing  
Children's Clothing

HOUSEHOLD

Furniture  
Hardware and Appliance  
Dry Goods, Rugs, Curtains,  
Etc.  
Coal, Oil, Ice and Heating  
Sales  
Used Furniture and Antiques

AUTOMOTIVE

Automobile Sales New and Used  
Service Station or Garage  
Accessory, Tire and Battery  
Sales

VARIETY

Department Store  
"5 and 10"  
Drug Store  
Cigar and News

MISCELLANEOUS

Sport, Photo, Hobby, Toy, Etc.  
Jewelry and Gift  
Florist Shop  
Book Store  
Office Machine and Furniture  
Office Supply and Stationery  
Pawn Shop  
Amusement Establishment  
Unclassified Retail Space

FINANCIAL

Bank  
Personal Loan  
Insurance Agencies and  
Real Estate Offices  
Brokers, Stock, Etc.

SERVICE TRADES

Personal Service  
Clothing Service  
Household Service  
Business Service  
Newspaper Publishing  
Professional Services

HEADQUARTERS OFFICE

GENERAL OFFICE

TRANSPORTATION

Railroad Uses  
Bus Uses  
Air Transport  
Trucking  
Auto Rental

PARKING

Customer Parking  
Commercial Parking

TRANSIENT RESIDENCE

Hotels and Other Transient  
Lodging  
Residential Type Rooming  
House

RESIDENTIAL

Permanent Dwelling Units

PUBLIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL

Public Buildings  
Organization and Charitable  
Institutions

INDUSTRIAL

WHOLESALE

Wholesale  
Warehouse

VACANCY

Vacant Building or Store  
Vacant Lot  
Commercial Storage

For a block to be considered in the central business district by these physical planning criteria:

1. It must have a Central Business District Height Index of one or greater. This is equivalent to a one-story building in central business district use, covering an entire block.
2. It must have an Intensity Index equal to or greater than fifty per cent.
3. It must be part of a contiguous group of blocks surrounding the peak value intersections.
4. If it does not reach the required index values, it must be surrounded by blocks which do.

When using these criteria, it should be understood clearly that often no clear-cut line can be drawn between what is, and what is not a central business district use. Absolute definition of formal downtown boundaries is difficult, even impossible, in most instances. The prime purpose of the delimitation technique is purely and simply to provide a starting point from which physical planning can proceed.

Utilizing data for the area which is defined as the central business district, we find that a comparison of the internal characteristics of the Kalamazoo downtown can be made with those of eleven other cities for which similar data is available. This comparison is shown in Table II, which illustrates the percentage of each use in total floor space within the downtown of these cities, and Table III, which summarizes external characteristics of the same group of cities.

TABLE NO. II

INTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TWELVE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS  
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL FLOOR SPACE DEVOTED TO VARIOUS USES

	Kalamazoo Mich.	St. Peters- burg Fla	Miami Fla.	Grand Rapids Mich.	Mobile Ala.	Phoenix Ariz.
R - Retail Trades	25.0	24.5	23.5	25.2	33.8	34.8
S - Service Trades	7.8	5.4	2.9	3.7	2.1	4.9
O - Offices	12.3	13.1	24.1	24.3	16.5	20.0
P - Parking	16.3	10.6	18.5	8.7	7.8	7.8
T - Transportation Terminals	0.4	1.7	Included in S.	0.6	1.0	1.1
L - Hotels	6.8	30.9	22.0	10.5	9.4	13.3
D - Transient & Per- manent residences	4.2	2.7	Included in U.	1.8	1.8	2.4
U - Public and Organizational	10.9	6.5	9.0	14.0	14.7	10.2
X - Industrial, Whole- sale, Vacancy	16.3	4.6	Included in U.	11.2	12.9	5.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE NO. II

INTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TWELVE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS  
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL FLOOR SPACE DEVOTED TO VARIOUS USES

	Roanoke Va.	Sacra- mento Calif	Salt Lake City Utah	Tacoma Wash.	Tulsa Okla.	Worcester Mass.	Aver- age
R - Retail Trades	37.4	33.8	30.1	39.6	23.1	29.9	30.05
S - Service Trades	8.3	3.7	4.2	2.9	2.1	5.1	4.43
O - Offices	12.8	11.8	21.2	19.5	38.1	22.0	19.64
P - Parking	6.0	5.3	9.1	6.5	6.1	5.6	9.03
T - Transportation Terminals	1.3	1.0	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.75
L - Hotels	17.0	17.5	7.8	11.8	12.4	5.3	13.73
D - Transient & Per- manent Residences	1.9	6.8	4.9	1.8	2.8	6.8	3.16
U - Public and Organizational	9.1	13.6	10.2	7.1	10.4	14.7	10.86
X - Industrial, Whole- sale, Vacancy	6.2	6.5	11.9	10.4	4.3	10.4	8.35
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.00

TABLE NO. III

EXTERIOR CHARACTERISTICS OF  
TWELVE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

	Kalamazoo Mich	St. Peters- burg Fla	Miami Fla	Grand Rapids Mich	Mobile Ala	Phoenix Ariz.	
Incorporated City	1-1956 population in thousands *	72.0	137	307	189	152	156
	2-Land area in square miles	13.8	56.0	34.2	23.4	25.4	29.0
	3-Gross land area (acres)	72.4	140.4	122.0	97.3	73.0	126.7
	4-Total ground fl. area in acres (inside prop lines)	47.4	76.3	98.0	58.9	50.4	76.8
Central Business District	5-Total Height Index	1.96	1.75	2.30	3.32	2.12	1.81
	6-CBD Use Height Index	1.34	1.5	2.1	2.4	1.5	1.5
	7-CBD Use Intensity Index	68.4	86.5	92.0	72.9	70.5	82.0
	8-Total floor space (acres)	85.6	125.0	224.0	195.5	107.1	138.8
	9-CBD Use Floor space (acres)	58.6	108.0	206.0	142.5	75.5	113.8
	10-Average block size (acres)	2.63	2.06	3.10	1.73	2.02	2.13
	11-Gross land of CBD as % of area of incorporated city	0.82	0.39	0.56	0.65	0.45	0.68

\*Sales Management Estimates

TABLE NO. III  
EXTERIOR CHARACTERISTICS OF  
TWELVE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

	Roanoke Va.	Sacra- mento Calif	Salt Lake City Utah	Tacoma Wash.	Tulsa Okla.	Worcester Mass.	Aver- age	
Incorporated City	1-1956 population in thousands*	100	160	204	158	235	207	172
	2-Land area in square miles	26.7	23.1	54.1	58.7	37.1	37.2	34.9
	3-Gross land area (acres)	77.4	188.2	189.4	67.8	136.3	87.1	114.8
	4-Total ground fl. area in acres (inside prop lines)	53.3	108.8	120.8	52.4	79.8	59.6	73.5
Central Business District	5-Total Height Index	2.34	2.01	2.11	2.34	3.15	2.96	2.34
	6-CBD Use Height Index	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.9	2.6	2.0	1.8
	7-CBD Use Intensity Index	82.8	73.1	73.0	80.5	82.5	67.9	77.5
	8-Total floor space (acres)	124.5	228.4	255.4	122.4	251.8	176.7	169.2
	9-CBD Use Floor space (acres)	103.1	167.0	186.4	98.6	207.7	120.0	131.6
	10-Average block size (acres)	1.72	2.13	6.71	1.59	1.86	2.13	2.48
	11-Gross land of CBD as % of area of incorporated city	0.45	1.27	0.55	0.18	0.57	0.37	0.58

\*Sales Management Estimates

### PART III

#### KALAMAZOO'S FUTURE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Selection of a planning time span for our future downtown Kalamazoo must be carefully made. The span must not be so short that the plan loses long range validity; nor can it be so great that the plan becomes totally visionary. For Kalamazoo we feel the proper planning period is between twenty and twenty-five years in the future and have selected 1980 as our goal year. Summarized in Table IV are the key area projections which we estimate should be used to plan our Kalamazoo downtown of 1980.

The table has been divided into six major use classifications:

Retail - Including establishments retailing food, clothing, household goods, and general merchandise.

Service - Including business, professional, personal household, and clothing services, as well as newspaper publishing operations.

Office - Including all general office space and financial institutions.

Civic, Cultural and Organizational - Including public and organizational buildings.

Wholesale and Warehousing - Including non-retail selling operations and bulk storage.

Hotel - Including high grade, high turn-over, multi-level transient lodgings.

For each of these business types, Table IV shows the estimated gross floor area, gross ground coverage, and parking requirements.

Gross floor area estimates are based upon the assumption that normal supply and demand relationships will continue to exist, and that entrepreneurial activity will occur consistent with implementation of a sound, comprehensive plan for the central business district.

TABLE NO. IV  
ESTIMATED 1980 SPACE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO

USE	ESTIMATED TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREAS - SQUARE FEET	ESTIMATED TOTAL GROUND AREA RE- QUIRED - SQUARE FEET	ESTIMATED TOTAL PARKING AREA RE- QUIRED - SQUARE FEET
Retail	1,000,000	360,000	1,620,000
Service	300,000	150,000	432,000
Office	700,000	90,000	252,000
Civic, Cultural & Organizational	1,000,000	500,000	360,000
Wholesale & Warehousing	100,000	50,000	72,000
Hotel	400,000	80,000	108,000
TOTALS	3,500,000	1,230,000	2,844,000
	Allowance for setbacks and private open spaces	308,000	
	Employee parking requirements		1,306,000
	TOTALS	1,538,000	4,150,000
		Total Cars	11,500*

\*Based upon 360 sq. ft. per car

Various criteria were applied in arriving at the estimated floor areas:

Retail - Gross areas shown were derived using standards currently employed in the planning of new retail facilities. Available information suggests that, in all probability, many stores in downtown Kalamazoo are now operating below present concepts of efficiency. Consequently, the actual area of retail units now in operation most likely exceeds the area that would be justified if sound standards of productivity were applied.

The estimate takes into account a gradual migration of less specialized, convenience-oriented retail facilities from the central business district to outlying suburban locations. At the same time, it assumes the central business district will tend to include more specialized, less convenience-oriented retail units catering to specific retail needs of the entire trade area.

It further assumes that downtown retail facilities will keep pace in terms of aggressiveness and modern merchandising policies with those developments in outlying portions of the trade area.

Again, it should be emphasized that the sales volumes anticipated from these areas can be expected only if sound and imaginative planning for Kalamazoo's central business district proceeds along the general lines established by this study.

Service - Located downtown at present are several service establishments occupying large floor areas and having light industrial characteristics. It is expected that, as the plan for downtown Kalamazoo is implemented, this space will prove more valuable for other downtown oriented service uses.

Taking into account trade area growth trends, present downtown occupancy characteristics and probable future value levels in the central business district, we estimate the 1980 space requirements for service activities will be slightly lower than exist at present.

Office - Although floor area requirements for office space vary widely from city to city, Kalamazoo's present supply seems to be in line with that of the average American community of comparable size.

It should be realized, however, that Kalamazoo, as an industrial community, houses much of its office space in structures directly adjacent the manufacturing operation. This, of course, tends to decrease the proportion of office space normally contained in the downtown area.

Having in mind the anticipated growth and the probable development pattern of future office space as revealed by present trends, we estimate a demand for approximately 700,000 square feet of office space by 1980 if the basic planning objectives of our revitalization plan are achieved.

Civic and Cultural - The future demand for civic and cultural space is extremely difficult to predict because facilities for these functions are located by policy decisions alone without the competitive pressures that influence location decisions for most other types of activity.

At the present time, we have no way of knowing what future policy decisions may be made relative to expansion of existing civic and cultural areas. Therefore, for planning purposes, we have maintained at approximate present levels the floor space devoted to civic and cultural uses. Adequate space, however, has been provided in the plan to accommodate substantial expansion of this type of activity in the future should policy decisions lead to such expansion.

Because of their contribution to the over-all health, balance, and stability of the central business district, we strongly recommend that increases in the civic and cultural activities, especially those centering on Bronson Park, be vigorously encouraged.

Wholesale and Warehousing - These activities are not so closely linked with the primary functions of the central business district. However, because of their importance in servicing and distributing goods to a

few specific downtown establishments, it is desirable to locate some facilities in close proximity to the central city. The balance can probably fulfill their proper function more efficiently and economically in outlying locations. Therefore, a substantial reduction in the amount of floor space devoted to this use is recommended in our 1980 Kalamazoo central business district.

Hotel - We estimate that only small increases in hotel space will be required in Kalamazoo's future downtown. However, this presumes the upgrading of facilities consistent with that occurring for other downtown functions.

At present, a sizable portion of downtown Kalamazoo's hotel facilities are not fully competitive with the modern motel accommodations found in outlying areas. The plan recommends replacement of less competitive hotel establishments with modern units that reflect renovation and upgrading of certain of downtown Kalamazoo's better hotel facilities.

Through this process of replacement and remodeling, the future hotel accommodations in Kalamazoo's central business district will have somewhat the same quantity that exists today but will represent substantial improvement in terms of quality.

For each of the downtown uses, ground coverage was calculated based upon an assumed number of activity levels. The number of levels in which a function is housed depends upon several factors, including the size of the city, value of downtown land, population of the trade area, and other factors of a similar nature. The number of levels used has been selected consistent with the characteristics of the future city of Kalamazoo and represents desirable development goals.

Ground coverage calculated by use of these levels has been increased twenty-five per cent to allow for setbacks and open areas within private property lines. Thus, the total of 1,538,000 square feet represents land area devoted to public or private ownership, exclusive of public malls and plazas, service rights of way, and parking spaces.

Parking areas have been calculated for both employee and public requirements. These are each predicated upon observations and studies made in many cities. The totals have been modified, where necessary, to reflect achievement of optimum operational efficiency and maximum customer convenience. Adjustments have also been made in the calculation of total employee requirements to reflect ride sharing and use of public transportation. Additional modifications have been applied to allow for overlapping of heavy night time requirements in use of cultural facilities and other night time functions.

The total required parking areas in square feet presumes utilization of an average space of 360 square feet per car. This includes internal circulatory roads, landscaped areas, and service drives, all within the parking areas, but does not include the peripheral roadway.

The arrangement of parking facilities in our new downtown Kalamazoo Plan has been based upon the concept of a pedestrian environment created for the internal core of the central district. To understand why different methods must be found to accommodate the automobile than the present pattern of through streets and on-street parking facilities, we must examine the anticipated traffic requirements of downtown Kalamazoo in the year 1980.

By this time, due to increased automobile registrations and more intensive use of downtown, we estimate approximately 35,000 automobiles will visit the central business district each day. During peak hours, at least 10,000 of these, plus nearly 12,000 through vehicles, would have to be accommodated within the present street system if this system were allowed to remain in its present pattern..

Let us further assume that of these 22,000 vehicles we accommodate at least half of them, or 11,000, at the peak period on the street system simultaneously. Consider that 11,000 cars standing still, bumper to bumper, occupy 2.2 million square feet; start these cars moving, at say an average rate of 15 miles per hour, and the area occupied doubles to 4.4 million square feet; add twenty per cent for stalled cars, collisions, poor drivers, through traffic interference, plus general confusion, and the total jumps to over 5.2 million square feet. This assumes that each car will arrive at its destination and find a parking space

available. If this isn't possible, of course, the street requirements must be increased even more.

Comparing this figure with our present street areas, we find that it is nearly four times as much. Obviously, such devices as one-way streets, prevention of left turns, increased signalization, and elimination of curb parking will not suffice to solve the overwhelming traffic problems we can expect by 1980.

Although some relief might come from greater use of public transportation, a continuous rise in automobile registrations, among other factors, makes it unrealistic to depend upon this as a sole solution.

Therefore, we arrive at a plan whereby through traffic having no business in the downtown can be carried around the central district on limited access roads; a plan by which traffic destined for downtown can enter and park in areas conveniently accessible to adequately sized roadways and parking lots. The interior core of downtown can then be reserved exclusively for the pedestrian.

There remain certain circulation problems which must be recognized and solved. These include the handling of service traffic, the accommodation of public transportation facilities, transportation within the core for those unable or unwilling to walk, and emergency vehicular movement.

Service Traffic - Service traffic to the interior core has been described already. No major problems exist to prevent the efficient accommodation of such service traffic in our replanned downtown Kalamazoo.

Certain special functions, such as hotels, require direct contact at pedestrian areas for vehicular traffic such as taxi and private car arrivals. Service of these facilities by special vehicular routes can be determined in detail as implementation proceeds. However, the general locations now occupied by downtown Kalamazoo hotels lend themselves easily and conveniently to the incorporation of such direct customer service. This is particularly so of the extension of Michigan Mall to the northeast.

Public Transportation - A major goal of our downtown Kalamazoo Plan is to encourage the use of public mass transit. To do this, we provide the patron of the mass transit system advantages over those gained by use of the private automobile. One of the most important of these advantages is to bring the customer as close to his destination as possible. This is easily accomplished in our new plan by penetrating the peripheral parking areas with public transit loops which deposit riders at the very edge of the pedestrian downtown core.

From these points it is only a short walk to any destination within the core. If the weather is inclement, or the patron is tired or burdened with packages, he or she can easily board the small electric shuttle bus whose terminal facilities are directly adjacent those of the public transit system.

Transportation Within the Core - The passenger who boards the small electric shuttle bus can be carried quickly and conveniently to any portion of the downtown core with an absolute minimum of walking.

It is interesting how many pedestrian environments there are today that make use of such a transportation system. Consider how many of our large zoological gardens and amusement parks utilize one or the other of a variety of noiseless, odorless and smooth riding vehicles. Think back on how successful the use of these small shuttles was at the Chicago and New York World's Fairs.

Emergency Vehicles - Routing of emergency vehicles such as police, fire, and ambulance, can be accomplished in many ways. The arrangement of our replanned downtown actually increases efficiency by offering a greater choice of convenient routes of travel than employed even now. Within the pedestrian core, certain lanes of travel will be assigned to such vehicles and kept free of obstructions. These routes can be marked with painted lines or patterned paving so that pedestrians would know, upon hearing the siren or bell, that the space within the lane should be evacuated. It is entirely possible that a system of actuated lights could be used to mark the lanes. These lights would be controlled from each of the emergency vehicles'

terminals upon the receipt of an alarm, or they could be actuated by the approach of the vehicle itself.

PART IV  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Legal Considerations

The major legal consideration in initiating our downtown Kalamazoo Plan is that dealing with the problem of reuse of vehicular thoroughfares. Detailed consideration of this subject is not within the scope of the present study. However, preliminary conferences with agencies having jurisdiction over county and city roads indicate that no major problems exist. This is substantiated by the increasing number of cities throughout the United States that are experimenting with conversion of selected vehicular thoroughfares to pedestrian areas, both temporarily and permanently, with great success.

There are several methods by which a reuse of the thoroughfares may be attained. Within the state and county road net, a transfer of jurisdiction over a right of way to the next smaller governmental unit can be achieved by joint agreement. Thus, a transfer of jurisdiction can be made from the county to the municipality, after which it is possible for the municipality to reserve the right of way for other uses by methods described below:

Abandonment - Upon abandonment of a right of way, the property usually reverts to the abutting property owners. It is entirely possible that, where common agreement has been obtained from these property owners for the reuse of this right of way as a pedestrian area, proper easements could be provided to the municipality.

For example, in Kalamazoo, if Rose Street was abandoned between Michigan and South, the right of way would normally revert to the owners of that property abutting Rose Street. Assuming these owners were in favor of the creation, along this right of way, of a pedestrian area, they could then grant the city of Kalamazoo an easement for that purpose and transfer to the city the right of maintenance.

Road Closing - In the interest of public safety, a road may be closed to vehicular traffic where use of such road by vehicles would endanger the life, health, and welfare of the public. This is usually a temporary measure employed by jurisdictional bodies during road improvements, repairs, or other construction processes. The use of such a method can be only for short periods of time, and ownership of the right of way is retained by the responsible government agency.

A modification of this method, which is sometimes employed where extremely limited use of the thoroughfare by vehicles is desirable, can be achieved by erection of traffic barriers. These barriers are so arranged as not to close the street but to control use of it so that vehicles must travel at an extremely slow rate of speed and in devious paths. Essentially, it is a discouragement device and, consequently, is not recommended as a permanent method of achieving a pedestrian environment.

Enabling Legislation - Perhaps the most definitive and clear-cut approach to reuse of streets and the opening of them to pedestrian circulation can be achieved by passage of enabling legislation at the state level. Such legislation would allow the municipality to directly reuse, where such use was desirable from a community standpoint, the existing municipal thoroughfares for other purposes.

Serious consideration should be given to this method, and the support of other cities should be sought in achieving such legislation. With the ever mounting realization that vehicular traffic must be limited or eliminated in our downtown sections, more and more cities will be seeking answers to the problems of right of way reuse. By concerted effort at the state level, the passage of enabling legislation might prove the best and easiest approach to the problem.

In the city of Kalamazoo, legal sources indicate that an immediate program of study should be undertaken to determine original deed conditions and reversionary rights on all streets involved in the new downtown Kalamazoo Plan.

At the same time, city legal authorities should begin detailed studies of what enabling legislation would be appropriate and how it could be achieved. Such studies by competent legal agencies are vital and should be initiated immediately.

### Public Parking Facilities

Recognizing the city's public parking responsibility, Kalamazoo has for a number of years, pursued a realistic and vigorous policy of public parking facility development. Starting almost a decade ago, the city began a program of parking lot acquisition and operation. Today, public parking facilities are located throughout Kalamazoo in strategic areas where they supplement parking facilities made available by private investment.

Considering the increase in traffic volume and parking areas that will accompany future growth of downtown Kalamazoo, the role of public parking will become more and more important in achieving the goals and objectives of the downtown Kalamazoo Plan.

Because of past experience in the field of public parking, the city government of Kalamazoo is in an unusually strong position to assume its civic responsibility in this matter. Unlike many cities where public parking has been attempted only half-heartedly or unsuccessfully, Kalamazoo has accumulated a strong background based upon careful acquisition programs, realistic financial planning, and sound management policies.

According to local officials, Kalamazoo's public parking program has been a financial success and has, at the same time, alleviated critical parking shortages. In both downtown and suburban parking installations, the city's financial expectations have been exceeded by the actual operating experience of the public lots.

Not only have these lots helped to maintain existing suburban and downtown property values, but surplus revenue from the successful parking lot operations has been used to finance general traffic control programs and improvements throughout the city.

With only one exception Kalamazoo's public parking lots have been financed by bond issues based on parking lot revenues. Due to very favorable operating results, the outstanding bond issues have been substantially retired, long in advance of their maturity dates. In addition, for the past few years at least, a considerable surplus has resulted from operation of the lots. Some of this surplus has been diverted to help solve Kalamazoo's other traffic problems, while the greatest part has been used for acquisition of additional lots in a continuing program.

The one exception to bond financing in Kalamazoo's public parking program is an important downtown lot which was financed by the creation of a special assessment district. This advanced and somewhat unique method of public parking financing levied a special assessment against downtown commercial facilities benefiting most directly from the development of the parking lot.

This lot, financed through creation of the special assessment district, like those financed through bond issues, has been a financial success, both from the standpoint of the city and of the downtown businessmen within the assessment district.

According to reliable sources, there are at the present time no official city plans for additional public parking improvements. However, successful precedent for future developments has been firmly established. The revenues from existing lots have more than returned the city's investments. Most importantly, a critical public need has been met successfully. The stage is now set for future public parking improvements, but Kalamazoo's city government is awaiting more clear-cut definitions of future over-all public parking needs before expanding their program.

This plan for the revitalization of downtown Kalamazoo defines the future parking needs for the central district and establishes well founded and comprehensive parking objectives. With its unusual depth of experience, Kalamazoo's city government is now in a position to fulfill a vital role in the parking implementation of this downtown Kalamazoo Plan.

It is an opportunity which can hardly be overlooked, considering its basic importance to the economic well-being of the total community.

## Continuing Studies

The program outlined in this downtown Kalamazoo Plan sets forth in complete form the philosophy, the goals, and methods by which these can be achieved. Naturally, over the coming years, detailed investigations of each of the elements of the plan will have to be carried on as implementation proceeds. Some of the more important of these continuing investigations are described below:

Street and Transportation System - The suggested street system shown on the ultimate plan is predicated upon the concept of a non-signalized system of low speed peripheral roads feeding into the tributary street pattern. Additional access is provided to higher speed, limited access roads which are major north-south, east-west connectors.

The schematic system proposed is adequate to handle safely and smoothly the peak hour traffic. However, the traffic problem is far from static, and changing conditions such as stage development of the plan, the rights of way available, the monies available for additional structures, car sizes, and use of public transit - all will influence and may ultimately modify the schematic peripheral road plan suggested.

What is important, however, is that throughout all planning and stage development, the loop road concept, in its proposed location, be retained as a major element of the plan.

We suggest that continuing traffic counts and origin-destination surveys be made periodically. It is also important that detailed studies of mass transit characteristics be made regularly by competent traffic authorities. Truckers delivering to downtown should be encouraged to participate and assist in a constant effort to improve their operation.

Only by concerted efforts on the part of everyone connected with each element of the over-all traffic picture, can success be insured.

Zoning - The plan for Kalamazoo's future downtown suggests a pattern of land use. It is important to

understand that this is only the first step in the preparation and adoption of a revised detailed zoning ordinance for the central business district.

Once the planning concept has been accepted by the public and by the city government of Kalamazoo, immediate steps should be taken to prepare a revised detailed zoning ordinance conforming to the plan. This ordinance will then become the official long range plan for downtown Kalamazoo. The administration of the ordinance will require a continuing program best accomplished by the Kalamazoo Plan Commission and its staff.

Economics - Closely allied to other continuing studies is that work pertaining to economic evaluation during the implementation phase. Although much of the plan's success depends upon initiative shown by private enterprise, certain very important elements pertinent to economic areas are best studied as combined public and private projects.

Such items as the financing of parking and other improvements, periodic study of the impact of the plan's implementation upon the community's economic base and advice concerning economic aspects of land use and location are part of an essential program which can lend stability to the implementation phase.

Legal - Legal advice and direction will be necessary from the very inception of the downtown Kalamazoo Plan. Once legal precepts have been established during the early stages of implementation, constant attention will be necessary to insure proper legal procedures, particularly relative to land use. It is anticipated that the majority of this legal advice, dealing with municipal problems, can be handled by the city of Kalamazoo's legal staff.

Architectural and Engineering - Only a minimum of detailed architectural and engineering studies will be necessary by municipal agencies during the plan's implementation. The majority of such programs and their resulting improvements will be conducted by private enterprise.

However, certain publicly financed architectural and engineering studies will probably be required for design and construction of parking lots and peripheral roads. In addition, engineering utility studies will be necessary as the plan proceeds. Additional architectural and engineering programs for the city will be limited primarily to enforcement of building codes and regulations.

Planning - Continuing planning studies must be conducted as each stage of the plan unfolds. This work can generally be described as the coordination of all aspects of the previously described continuing program.

Although the burden of the plan's implementation must fall upon the City Plan Commission and its staff, some direction and assistance from outside planning agencies will be desirable. It is of prime importance that the concept and spirit of the plan be kept constantly in view. Thus, the most valuable part that such continuing planning services will play is the objective, positive guidance they can furnish not only the city but those individuals who are striving to integrate their private activities into our new downtown Kalamazoo Plan.

#### Cost

At this point in the comprehensive planning for Kalamazoo's central business district, three basic implementation costs for the total program can be recognized:

- a. The cost of detailed continued planning
- b. The cost of needed public improvements
- c. The cost of private developments, commercial and otherwise

It is impossible at present to establish each of these three basic costs in detail.

Specific costs will depend upon a number of factors which cannot be precisely defined until more detailed planning and study have taken place, particularly with regard to the facilities to be developed at specified times within the over-all downtown Kalamazoo Plan.

However, the general economic feasibility of the plan concepts proposed here have been tested. These concepts are basically sound and the over-all planning goals can be achieved if:

- a. Careful design and economic study are part of the development of each individual facility.
- b. Kalamazoo's city government continues its program of public improvements, expressways and parking developments in conjunction with expansion of the community at large.
- c. Scheduling of developments is carefully programmed so that the flow of public and private investment into the central business district is steady, and the city's tax base is not thrown off balance by unwise timing.
- d. The city employs every form of state and federal financial assistance in carrying out the downtown plan and its objectives.

In summary, the cost of carrying out the plan can be met if careful competent programming is employed at every stage.

Total costs will be substantial. However, if prorated intelligently and objectively over a number of years, these total costs will represent annual outlays that can be reasonably borne by the public and private resources of Kalamazoo working side by side toward clear-cut goals.

In terms of the three basic costs involved, detailed planning and programming toward the over-all objectives can be accommodated within existing city planning expenditures, supplemented by outside sources, such as portions of the surplus from city public parking lot operations. Added to these public planning expenditures will be planning funds supplied by private groups interested in achieving the plan's goals as rapidly and effectively as possible.

With regard to the second basic cost - that of public improvements - a variety of revenue sources are available. First, and most importantly, are the public funds derived from the city's tax base. As discussed earlier, the preservation and expansion of the downtown tax base is of

prime importance. Levies against this healthier tax base should offset many of the public costs involved, particularly in the later stages of the program when the benefits of the plan should begin to reflect themselves in higher downtown property value levels.

The other sources of funds which could be used to offset the cost of public improvements are already utilized in Kalamazoo to finance public parking lots and other public improvements. These sources include bond issues and special assessment district. Here it should be noted that the surplus revenues from existing public parking operations could support a substantial portion of the continuing program of downtown parking space acquisition and facility development as contemplated by the plan.

Finally, as sources of funds for needed public improvements, there are many types of federal and state financial assistance available to communities. Present trends indicate a growing importance of funds from these sources. Every effort should be made to insure that Kalamazoo receives its fair share of these.

The preceding paragraphs have indicated the probable role of the various public financial resources in implementing the proposed downtown Kalamazoo Plan. Yet, despite their importance, public funds will be secondary to private investment in any truly successful planning program.

In effect, public funds will help to create the environment and induce the climate in which private investment will thrive and grow, discovering increased opportunities for new and profitable enterprises. In a central business district that goes beyond today's challenges to realize tomorrow's opportunities, private interest will develop new facilities and renovate existing structures, thus returning the economic life of the region to its proper focal point at the central business district.

In an atmosphere of stimulated competition, private enterprise will discover new values that have been obscured during the years when downtown Kalamazoo had failed to share fully in the region's growth. This atmosphere of new competition will generate space demands in the central business district that should lead to higher economic levels, higher investment rates, and more effective use

of the many central business district sectors which today are underdeveloped.

Through this chain reaction, vigorous competition and higher property values will lead to an enlarged tax base which can be used to support vital public improvements.

To accomplish the basic planning objectives through intelligent use of public and private resources will require time, courage, and careful attention to detail throughout the plan's implementation. Over the years, costs will be offset increasingly by the benefits that will come from a healthy, well organized, well integrated downtown. The price of action may be high, but the cost of inaction will most certainly be higher.

