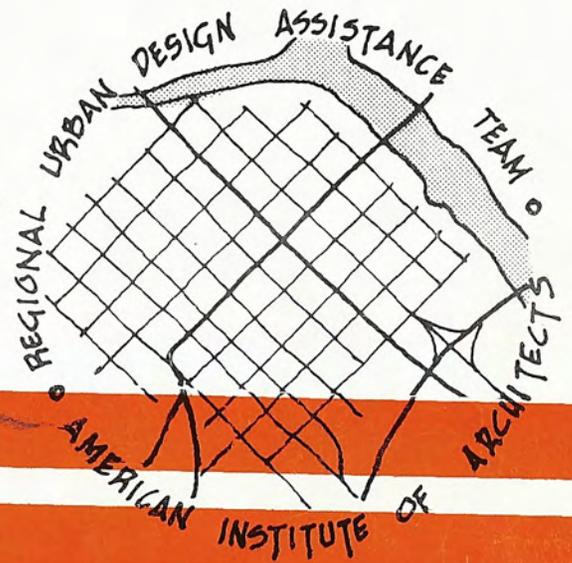


SHREVEPORT



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R/UDAT - SHREVEPORT
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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

No group of visitors can identify all the problems of a city and prescribe detailed solutions. But the organized impressions of a group of professionally trained and experienced visitors with no vested interest in either the status quo or proposed change can provide any city with a new perspective on its future. Their reactions, moreover, are likely to parallel the reactions of tourists, outside investors or potential employers who are essential to the healthy growth and development of the area. And their recommendations, free of any prospect of continuing consulting relationship, can be made without concern for their immediate acceptability to public or private interests.

We have spent four fruitful and informative days in Shreveport and have tried not to abuse our freedom to report matters as we see them. We have accordingly focused on real strengths and problems and attainable goals rather than "pie-in-the-sky" approaches.

As an interdisciplinary Team, we believe that a city should try to enhance the quality of life of its citizens not simply for economic reasons, nor for purely social or aesthetic reasons, but for all these. The city is the physical embodiment of the intangible values dear to the

multi-disciplinary planning

people of Shreveport. We have tried to recognize these values and suggest ways to evidence them in the form of a ~~physical development program~~^{process}. But the values of the people of Shreveport will control any program, and we cannot substitute our own for them.

The Team has detected an emerging consensus in many parts of the Shreveport community on what would be a desirable Downtown. Yet it was also apparent that many people who should be working together have not been sharing their common ideas and reinforcing independent but compatible approaches to shaping a better future for Downtown. Selected development goals recommended in this report have been framed to overcome this condition.

During early discussions, it became clear that there was a sense that Shreveport has been "overplanned and under-achieved". Since World War II, Shreveport has had at least two general plans, and a third is currently under consideration. Shreveport has had specific plans on highway corridors and alignments, recreational facilities, library sites, and many other elements. There appeared to be, however, the feeling that once a plan is completed, it is to be ignored until time to do the next plan...and then another plan...and yet another.

Shreveport must move away from the idea of "plan making" for its own sake and accept the fact that planning is an evolving process to stimulate and guide action. When one looks at planning in that way, it becomes clear that a city will never publish a completed final plan for the future, but develops a continuing and on-going information base, taking advantage of opportunity projects as they appear. Through the process of continuing evaluation, it adjusts and alters the plan to suit changing technological, environmental, social and political conditions.

This report is neither another plan nor a systematic comment on existing plans. Rather, it emphasizes a commitment to action...now... in the context of existing plans.



WHAT SHOULD A DOWNTOWN BE?

What Should a Downtown Be?

There are striking similarities among successful downtowns. Whether a city has a million inhabitants or a hundred thousand, whether its total area is 20 square miles or 200, the area that the citizens consider downtown is usually less than a square mile. It is also, of course, the place of greatest intensity--of physical development, economic activity, visitor population.

Every successful downtown is, as Jim Montgomery wrote in the Shreveport Times (2/16/75)"...a gathering together, a concentration of the life forces which makes for more efficient living in a structured society."

The Team has agreed, more specifically, that a downtown should aspire to be these things:

The Symbolic Center. In ancient Athens, it was the Acropolis. In today's city it may be in part the skyline, in part the special care given to architecture and design in an obviously special place, in part the clustering of the great public monuments and edifices that belong to everyone. Whatever it is, or whatever combination of factors, the downtown must play a symbolic role that gives a sense of identity to the entire city and probably a wider region--and a "sense of place" to those who live in, work in or visit the city.

The Marketplace. Although in many cities the traditional role of the downtown as providing almost the only retailing opportunities is declining, it remains essential that it have a marketplace function. The successful downtown responds to competition from outlying shopping centers by intensifying its capabilities in "one-of-a-kind" goods and services and ideas not usually available elsewhere in the region and not supportable at the neighborhood level. Perhaps you don't expect to find an ordinary grocery store in the heart of downtown, but if there is one gourmet food shop in the region, that's where it ought to be. Similarly, the highest quality levels in fashion, furnishings and many other merchandise categories belong downtown. But that is not where the marketplace function ends. The same logic suggests that advertising agencies, newspapers, radio and television stations, commercial artists, architects--in fact anybody who depends for patronage on all parts of the region--ought to be there, too.

The Managerial Center. The principal figures in major enterprise--both private and public--require convenient access to each other and the readily available services of the marketplace for their effective functioning. Governmental headquarters, private enterprise headquarters, communications headquarters, utility headquarters, financial headquarters and others need

to be in close proximity. And in recent decades this function has had especially vigorous growth in downtowns that can be considered successful.

The Cultural Center. As presumably the place where the greatest number of people can most easily congregate, downtown is the best location for the cultural facilities and activities of a regional character. The elements are obvious: the museums, the headquarters library, performing arts, convention and meeting facilities, the bigger and better restaurants, nightclubs, hotels, private art galleries and craft shops. Increasingly, too, downtowns and institutions of higher education are finding it mutually beneficial to come together. And in many places, cultural impulses are "taking to the streets" with festivals, outdoor art shows and performing arts events in public areas--all in the downtown.

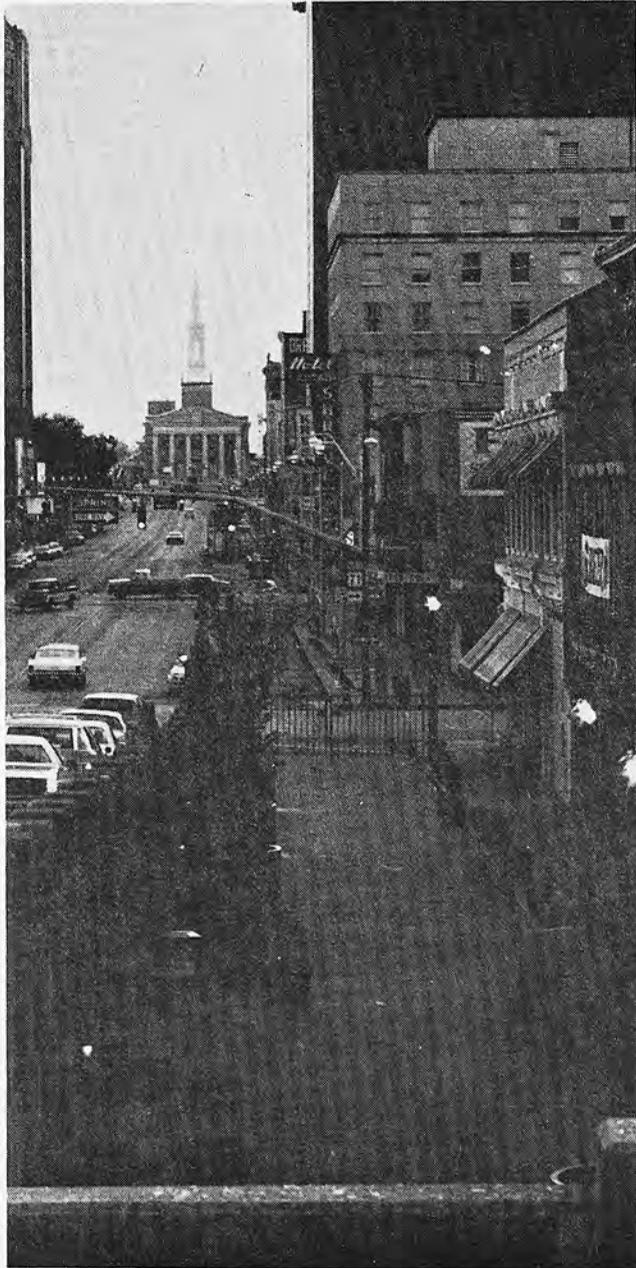
A Residential Community. Downtown living is a rapidly growing phenomenon in healthy urban areas. Some people--not all, certainly, but some--find the convenience to work, the lively spirit and the proximity to cultural attractions of greater appeal than more bucolic settings. The benefits to downtown are enormous. Downtown residents reinforce the marketplace activity, provide patronage for cultural facilities, make the streets

and public areas safer at night, stimulate the rehabilitation of old buildings--including, sometimes, old commercial or industrial properties for which there is otherwise no demand.

A Transportation Center. Apart from airports and major goods - movement terminals, downtown remains the logical hub for elements of the region's transportation systems. Public transit and downtown are mutually reinforcing if the one focuses on the other. Downtown is also the dominant "interchange" where persons go from one type of transportation to another--including most particularly the transition from passenger to pedestrian status. To enhance all aspects of this function, downtowns must approach as a coordinated system the provision of dependable and efficient public transit, adequate streets for private vehicle movements, parking facilities of adequate capacity and in acceptable locations, areas for goods-handling and service requirements that do not conflict with other movements, and a hospitable environment for pedestrians.



DOWNTOWN SHREVEPORT NOW



Downtown Shreveport Now

To look at Downtown Shreveport now, we started with the regional context.

Regional Context. Shreveport's location is generally central to a large developed area, on the periphery of which are Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Little Rock, Jackson and New Orleans. Its relationship to the Texas Trail and the River System, which at one time were the major transportation arteries gave Shreveport its start and was the prime justification for its existence.

In somewhat narrower terms it is useful to look at the region called Ark-La-Tex. Previous general plans for Shreveport considered Ark-La-Tex as the trade area and as such provided a somewhat smaller focus for Shreveport as the "core city" for that large region. Its location in the center of that region is clearly complicated not only by the existence of other smaller communities in the region but also by the fact that the region straddles the boundaries of three states.

This location has over the years created a circulation network throughout the region that focuses on the Shreveport-Bossier City river crossing. Shreveport became the hub of a railroad spoke system, since amplified by the beginnings of a highway road system. Some of the quirks in the network seem to have developed certain attitudes, however, which focus more of the

attention of Shreveport toward its adjacent Texas hinterland rather than its otherwise logical connection down the Red River to the state capital at Baton Rouge.

In a still narrower context, the Shreveport region is the combination of Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Bossier City and Bossier Parish. Within the City of Shreveport itself the Downtown district--even though off center from a purely physical point of view--can provide a focus for the activities of the two-parish region.

Strengths. Large numbers of older buildings, extensive in quantity and diversity, provide an inheritance that could become the foundation of a positive renewal of the Downtown. The viability of that approach has been shown in the recent developments found around Shreve Square and Commerce Street. Recent commitments by financial institutions to build new headquarters in the Downtown evidence confidence in the future of the area.

Another strength is the beginning awareness of the availability of the river and the bayou as frames within which development can proceed and to which the development can be related. This frame is strengthened by the topography, which raises the Downtown out of flat surroundings and emphasizes its physical primacy.

It is also fortunate that Downtown has remained compact, and thus susceptible to improved pedestrian movement.

Although some local participants in our discussions complained of difficult access to Downtown, we believe that such access is comparatively easy when compared to most American cities today. A few traffic adjustments -- smoother turning movements, one-way streets, judicious use of traffic signals -- could substantially increase even the comparatively good accessibility that now exists.

Of significant potential benefit to the existing Downtown is the fact that there are large amounts of space within and directly surrounding the area. These would make it possible to create infill development without large initial demolition or relocation of commercial or residential facilities. This would thereby avoid major difficulties of similar activities attempted elsewhere in this country.

The retention of both parish and federal office functions with their large employment and visitor populations are of also substantial benefit to Downtown.



Weaknesses. In common with many other downtown areas in the country there clearly appears to be declining retail volume. The competition from outlying shopping centers has taken its toll, with the prospect of even more competition if loop expressways are built.

Many buildings in the Downtown are under-utilized, with vacant second and third floors, with some vacant storefronts and vacant windows. Much land is also vacant or under utilized.

There also appears to be a lack of proper interrelationship between various uses of land in Downtown. Various uses that should complement and reinforce each other do not.

There is a serious lack of pedestrian amenities and human scale-- an almost total absence of trees, landscaping, benches, open spaces (except vacant lots). The general pattern of signs, advertising, and specific storefront graphics (outside of Shreve Square) is unattractive. The potential for attractive street furniture such as lighting, benches, trash cans, fire plugs remains unexplored.

The opportunity to create attractive residential opportunities downtown has not been realized and is, in fact, forbidden.

The surroundings are generally detrimental. The nearby housing is deteriorated. Industrial facilities are of a lowest standard economically and aesthetically.

Transit facilities are inadequate and discourage mass use.

Although some effort has been made to upgrade transient accommodations they are still inadequate, particularly for major convention and other meeting purposes.

The unfortunate location of city and state facilities outside of Downtown deprives it of the potential intensity of use essential to its purposes.

Whether valid or not there appears to be a widespread feeling that Downtown is unsafe, at least at night.





PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE

Prospects for Change

To a considerable extent the success of local efforts to improve Downtown Shreveport will require a realistic evaluation of existing opportunities and constraints. This evaluation should include: (a) listing of positive and negative conditions affecting the improvement of the downtown area; (b) evaluation of trends or changes affecting each of the conditions; and (c) recommended program of public-private actions designed to encourage or improve positive conditions and lessen the impact of negative conditions.

We have identified the following local conditions that may contribute to Downtown improvement:

Stability of the Local Economy. All indications are that Shreveport has not been seriously affected by recent national economic problems. Local trends reflect a balanced economic base resulting in relatively stable employment.

Financial Sector Commitment to Downtown. Recent developments and new proposals indicate a strong commitment to downtown by regional financial institutions. This is an indication of a positive trend as it reflects their confidence in the area as well as a potential source of financing for future projects.

Riverfront and Port Improvements.

Considerable public investment in both the riverfront renewal project and the port development, indicates a city commitment to improve an area potentially related to Downtown. Both of these projects may reflect a willingness on the part of the City to pursue sizable long-range programs that eventually will have a positive impact on Downtown.

Improving Racial Attitudes. We view as an important factor the positive attitudes generally expressed on race relations. Race relations in a city with Shreveport's demography and history have an obvious and significant effect on its economic potential and therefore continuing improvement should be actively cultivated.

Commitment by Key Segments of the Community. We were impressed by the support and positive attitude exhibited by key segments of the private sector including the news media, business leaders and the local architects. We hope this sense of optimism will spread in the community as it is necessary to long term improvement for Downtown.

So much for the good news. As mentioned earlier, an honest evaluation of both positive and negative conditions must be made. We identify the following key constraints affecting downtown improvement:

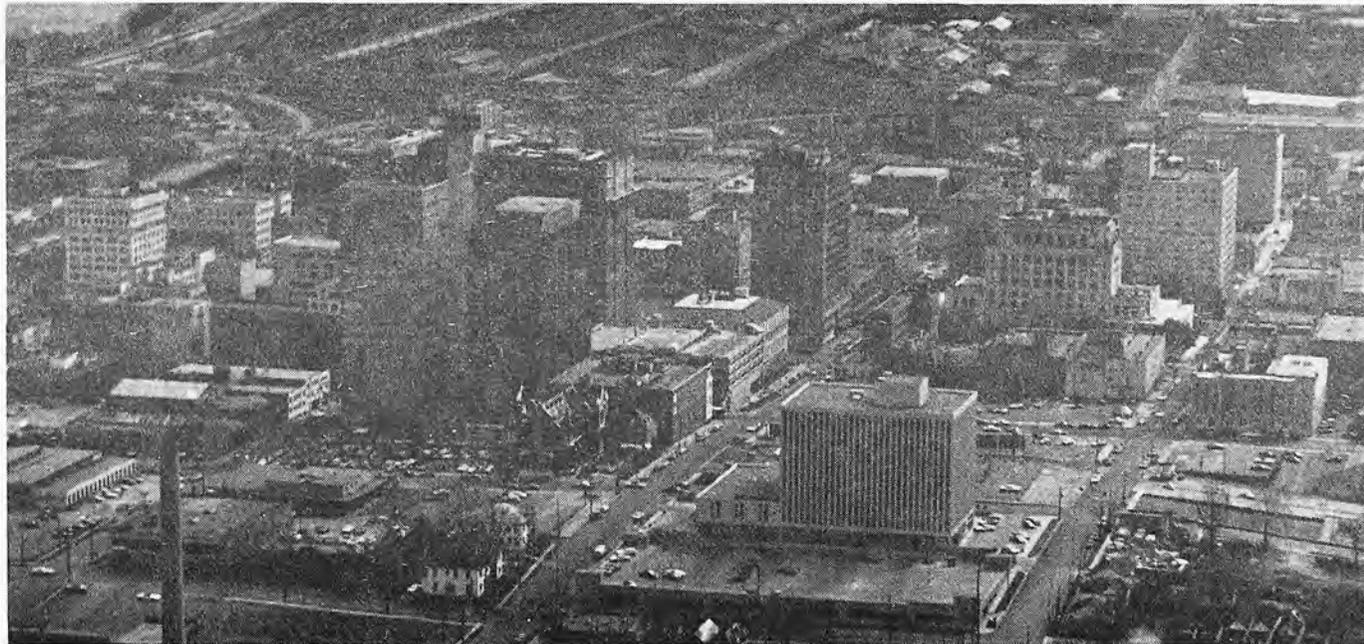
Lack of a Downtown Development Strategy. Neither public nor private officials identify with any particular development strategy for Downtown. This is reflected in the lack of coordination among various recent developments, no general sense of downtown priorities and limited public/private coordination of effort.

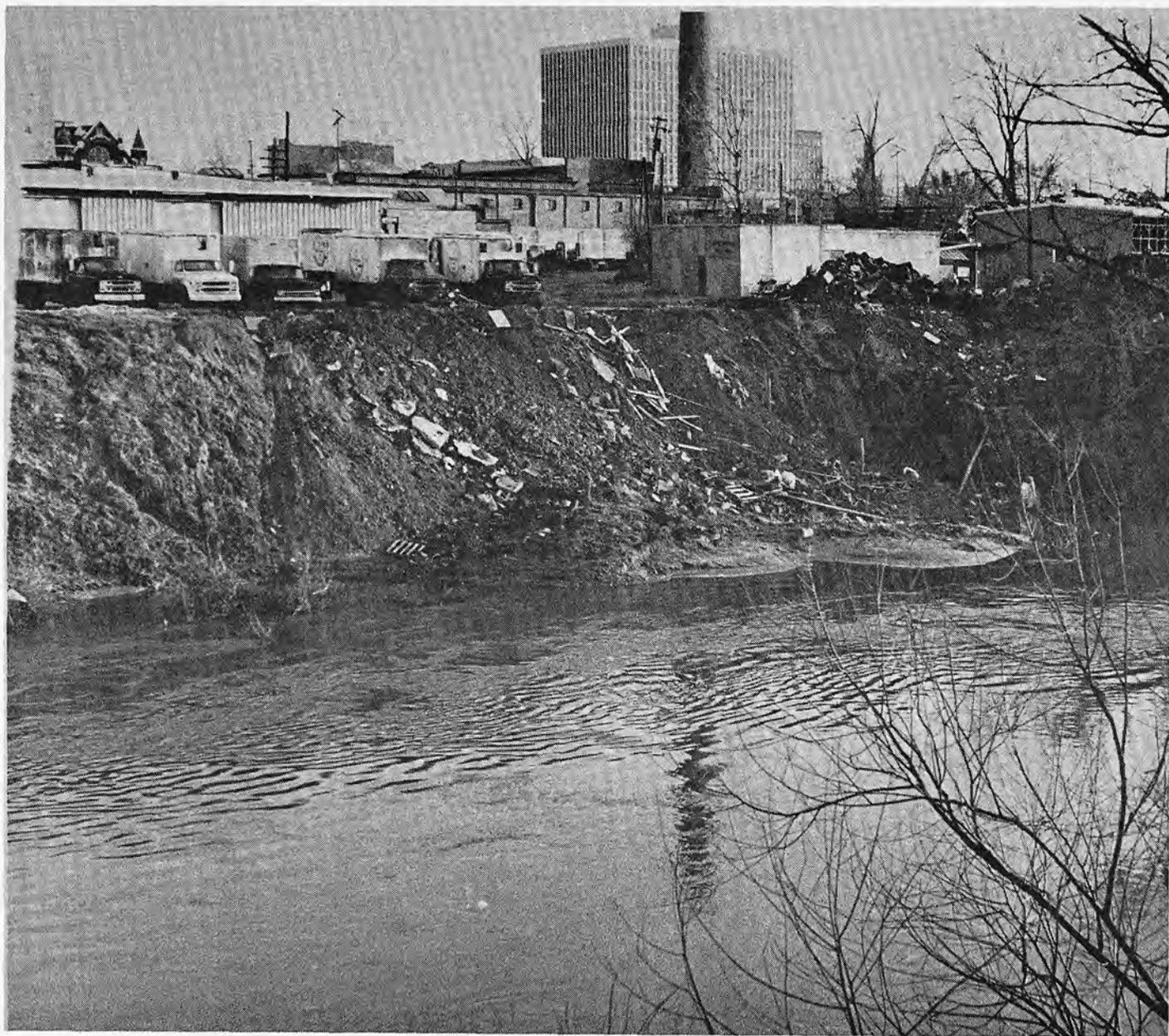
Need for Improved Local Government Coordination. Most of the written and oral information we received indicated a general lack of cohesion among various departments of local government. This lack of coordination generally assures that comprehensive planning will not be successful and has undoubtedly contributed significantly to the present attitude that planning is a substitute for action.

Lack of Private Sector Coordination.

The degree of coordination among key segments of the private sector concerned with Downtown improvement appears negligible. This includes the lack of any significantly funded organization or staffing addressed to stimulating development. As a result, we heard a great deal about lack of commitment and apathy.

Present Expressway Plans. We have a general concern with proposed expressway concepts in Shreveport. National experience with expressway construction, particularly urban "loops", suggests that they promote development that might otherwise strengthen the Downtown. Shreveport should explore **every** feasible constraint on such development if expressways are built and if Shreveport wants a viable downtown.





TARGET FOR TOMORROW

Target For Tomorrow

Achieving Agreement On Goals. To bring about constructive change will require some consensus on goals among elected city officials, private sector interests with a financial stake in the future of downtown, community interests with a social and civic interest in the area, and technicians responsible for carrying out public policy. If these groups fail to communicate with each other but simply make uncoordinated decisions, the downtown area will inevitably fall victim to regional and national trends and decision making.

No independent goal is likely to be achieved or to remain viable without broader based support in the community. For example, the real financial resource for bringing about a better downtown is in private hands, but public investment properly targeted can "leverage" private investment that will more than return the public investment over time. That public investment may have to be the "seed money" - the faith in the future that leads the way to private initiatives; but that public investment must be made with realistic understanding of like private initiatives. To do this requires agreement on goals that leaves the private/public ("we/they") manners of communications and action behind.

Attainable Goals for Downtown. As previous discussion has indicated, Shreveport's downtown has limitations, but it has not begun to realize the enormous potential within those limitations.

What can Downtown Shreveport realistically aspire to become as it builds on its strengths?

Downtown Shreveport is now the traditional symbolic center of Ark-La-Tex, but it does not yet convey the image of a self-confident, prosperous and well-ordered community. It can regain this position by becoming much more distinctive physically, with a visual and physical statement that says to the visitor and its own citizens: This is the heart of the region, this is where the most important business is transacted, the most interesting activities and most sensitive and advanced thinking is done. This is the place. The preservation of historic structures is one thing that can serve this purpose as a reminder of the traditional role of downtown.

Downtown Shreveport can become the market place for the region as new markets are created in a post-industrial society -- a market place where new ideas and highly specialized goods are exchanged. It would be wrong to conceive of downtown as the retail hub of the region. Rather, its role should be in unique specialty shops catering to tourist

and cultural activities, convenience service to downtown and near-downtown residents and the "one-of-a-kind" store that serves the regional market. Downtown should be the incubator of innovative merchandising efforts. Shreve Square has begun to build this retail image, which should be expanded. The development program we recommended elsewhere will reinforce this specialized retail function for Downtown.

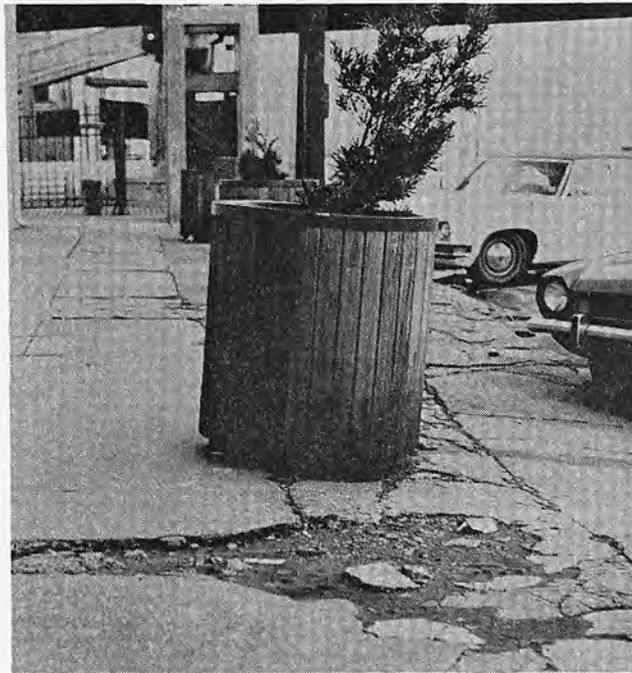
The highly visible commitment of major financial institutions to Downtown, alongside the parish and federal offices, continues to maintain Downtown's role as the managerial center of the region. Additional space should be promoted, in well-designed modern structures as well as rehabilitated older structures. For the future, the city should assure that major new office construction is combined, to as great an extent as possible, with other uses such as hotel and retail uses. A Downtown office should be regarded as a prestige location for those who manage the political, economic, financial, legal and cultural affairs of the region.

The existence of the Convention Center Complex and the Barnwell Center reflects a commitment to Downtown as the natural cultural center of the region. These uses would be reinforced by the riverfront plan recently announced. But a cultural center, sitting in splendid isolation will not



reinforce the other uses for Downtown, particularly at night. Hotels and motels and specialty shops need to be provided in close proximity to cultural facilities on the riverfront, so that those attending a concert or play will have reason to linger in Downtown instead of rushing to their cars to return home elsewhere in the region. A cultural complex that does not provide "spillover" activities in Downtown might just as well be an office building. One way to reinforce the riverfront cultural area would be to establish a much better pedestrian linkage with the Downtown. Downtown should also be considered the natural location for any higher education or specialized educational institutions that may be searching in the future for new locations.

To achieve success, the foregoing functions require quality residential developments in or near Downtown Shreveport for a diverse range of households and the clearance of unsightly, dilapidated housing. The presence of substandard living conditions in close proximity to new development conveys to the potential investor and the citizenry alike a negative message in regard to the city's self-image. In other cities this process has not been sensitively handled and perhaps Shreveport is fortunate that it has not made the mistake of demolishing substandard housing without offering occupants



better housing in decent neighborhoods. But this program needs to be undertaken as an immediate development goal in concert with new and rehabilitated low-rise quality housing in the heart of Downtown. Clustered residential developments with attractive landscaping and adequate parking could be fitted into the periphery of Downtown with little displacement of existing residents. Such housing will reinforce the market for existing and new retail uses, bring the area "alive after five" and thus convey the image of Downtown as a desirable and secure environment.

Threading through the functional goals should be a commitment to make Downtown the best pedestrian precinct in the region, a place where walking is fun and secure, where attractive places to sit, relax and enjoy life out of the rain or in the sun, are part of the street-scape, where cars and people have their separate place, where the chance meeting, the unexpected shopping discovery and the mild flirtation are hoped for, where evidences of the seasonal changes bloom amid the concrete, brick and glass of the built environment. All of this is possible in Shreveport Downtown if public-private action is well designed and coordinated.

To make Downtown primarily a pedestrian precinct will require the taming of the automobile, but not necessarily the creation of pedestrian malls or the closing of major streets. Foremost must be a design plan to enable the pleasant and efficient transportation interchange

from auto to foot. This means the phasing out of surface parking as other development objectives are realized, in favor of parking structures that lead the motorist from the car to centers of activity in sheltered, secure and attractive passageways. Surface parking, where it exists, should be redesigned to create a more parklike setting that overcomes the wide-open barren expanses that alter pedestrian movement. In addition, as other elements of the recommended design objectives are achieved, inexpensive minibus routes to shuttle riders and shoppers in the Downtown area should be resumed.





PRESCRIPTION FOR ACTION

Prescription for Action

The First Steps. Later, we will have recommendations, as to the large tasks -- organizational and physical -- that lie ahead in the near-term and long-range future. By their nature, these will take time, ranging from several months to several years. To assure serious initiative toward their accomplishment, to create a sense of momentum and to work for a climate of consensus, it is vital that several things start to happen now -- literally this month.

Among the possibilities:

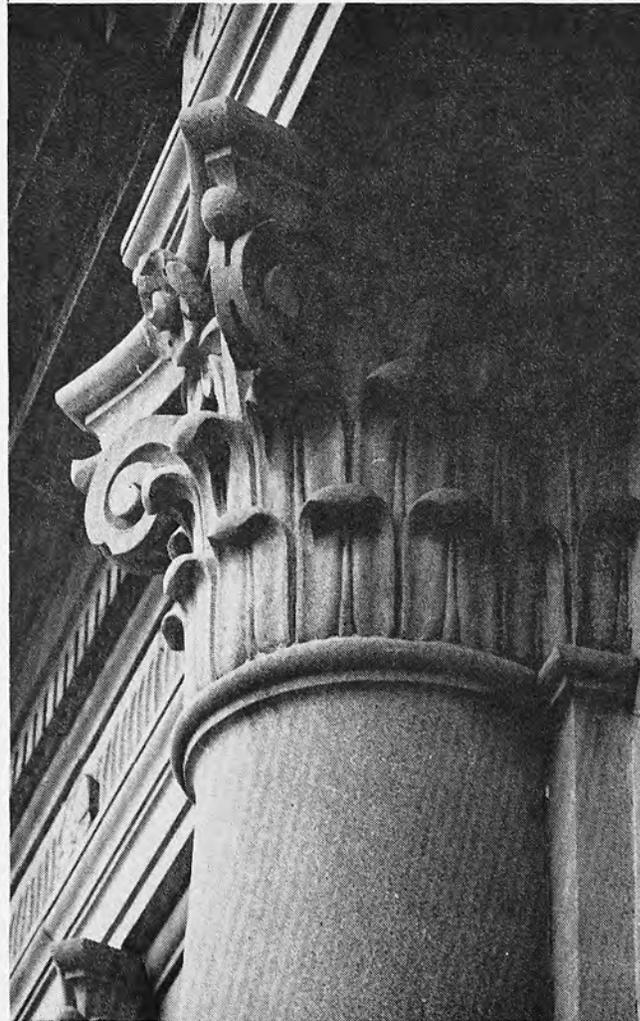
Arrange for the display windows of vacant shops to be made available for exhibits of paintings and other art objects.

Put plants-in-pots at strategic intersections.

Paint murals and super-graphics on dead walls.

Plan street celebrations anticipating the revitalization of Downtown Shreveport.

Launch a campaign to persuade merchants and property owners to paint-up and fix-up their private buildings. Demonstrate the possible effects in one or more controlled situations. What Downtown Shreveport needs today is quick victories, however modest.



Selected Development Objectives.
Previously mentioned strategic goals for Downtown Shreveport must be reached by tactical stepping stones. Among these are five objectives recommended for immediate action. They are consistent with, and progress toward, the goals; they can be started immediately; they can be attained over the short term; they are of significant scale and are therefore a challenge to the city's will and skill. They are, in short, an early test of Shreveport's ability to carry out a downtown plan:

Project "Recycling"

There are areas within and adjacent to Downtown that include buildings of substantial quality and character. These form an architectural diary of Shreveport's origin and history. Some are old, some are relatively new. All are threatened by the deterioration of their setting. All are potential assets for reversing the deterioration. Shreve Square is a small but encouraging straw in the winds of change, pointing the way to a better downtown-- a way of preserving the architectural and historical heritage of the city while also encouraging the downtown economic base by establishing a unique magnetism.

Whether appraising the future of a single major structure (the old Post Office),

or an old mercantile section (Commerce Street), or of a once-healthy close-in residential area, the lesson of Shreve Square should be applied. The lesson is Darwinian -- "Adapt or die!" It is applicable even to so new a structure as the City Hall. The public managerial function of Shreveport should someday return to downtown for its benefit and for that of Shreveport, and the present City Hall should be "recycled" for some other use.

Project "Urbane Housing"

Among the new wines available for recycling into the beautiful old architectural bottles of downtown Shreveport are residential uses. These will serve residents with particular aspirations and in particular circumstances - the elderly, the young marrieds and single persons; the professional with a downtown job or clientele; the transient; the urban person. In many cities, desirable and marketable residential environments have been developed in such seemingly odd places as the second and third floors above shops and restaurants; in abandoned churches and synagogues; in newly built but unrented office buildings. Why not in Shreveport????

If recycling historic buildings for residential works, it will create

the market for new downtown construction. This need not always take the form of high-rise elevator apartments (although some residents may prefer these). Clustered townhouses and low-rise walk-ups are eminently suitable for Downtown and close-in development in Shreveport. If properly designed these can provide greater privacy and security than can be achieved in free-standing suburban developments.

Project "Parking Comfort"

The Team is distressed by the scale of commitment of potentially valuable land to surface parking. These vacant blocks are of great potential value to the future development of Downtown. New and large buildings can be "plugged in" to Downtown with no problem of destroying or relocating pre-established uses. Yet those lots are also a detriment to such new buildings. They contribute to the depressing aura of downtown Shreveport as a place OF little interest FOR new buildings (or else why the vacant lots); as a place WITH little interest IN its visitors (else why the rawness of these lots as seen by the pedestrian and the motorist).

A program for improving the appearance and comfort of these large parking lots is suitable and desirable. Trees could

shade the vehicles with but minor loss of parking spaces. These, together with shrubbery screens or light-work walls, could contribute to the attractiveness of downtown Shreveport as seen by the passer-by. The investment in such an improvement program need not be great nor should it result in structures that would inhibit the future development of these lots.

Project "Streetscape"

The beautification of the parking lots should be extended to the streetscape. Beauty and amenities in the public armature of Downtown are like bread cast upon the waters. The relatively small cost will be returned many-fold by the attraction of tax-paying users who, in turn, will make feasible new Downtown buildings.

Downtown Shreveport's streets desperately need trees and many of them. Given its climate most can and should be broad-leaf evergreens. The streets also need lighting scaled to serve the pedestrian instead of (or in addition to) the car. They need comfortable and attractive looking sidewalks with navigable curbs.

Public street paraphernalia (parking meters, traffic signals, signs, and stanchions) should be up-graded in appearance if not replaced by better designed devices. Private signs should be improved as a public purpose. Small

arcades, malls and semi-malls should be tested as part of a long-term program for creating an amenable pedestrian precinct in Downtown Shreveport.

All of the four selected development projects interlock. An ugly streetscape inhibits the entry of new residents into Downtown. The absence of these residents reduces the opportunity for preserving historic buildings and areas by discouraging new economic uses for them. The net effect is to escalate, rather than to stay or reverse, the continuing deterioration of Downtown Shreveport.

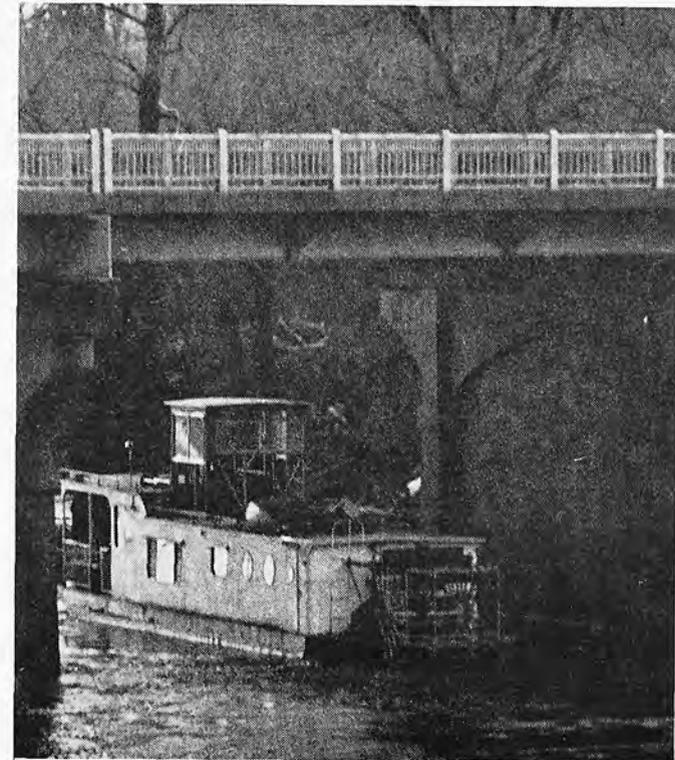
All four projects must therefore proceed at the same pace, and with even-handed encouragement by the City and Parish governments.

The opportunities in these projects will no doubt be seen by private enterprise, but private enterprise may not risk the capital and energy needed to realize them without positive advance action by the public sector.

Such advance actions as major tree planting; acting as the buyer of last resort for threatened historic structures; clearing the red tape which trammels so many private initiatives will encourage the private investment of public capital.

This public participation should also be aimed at multiplying the effects of such private investments. One plus

one can add up to three. A theatre will beget a restaurant if encouraged so to do. Downtown housing will similarly beget a convenient shopping center. Its residents will attend the theatre.



The Mechanism for Obtaining the Objectives. Adequate comment has been given to the fragmentation of powers, responsibilities and influences in both the private and public sectors that has until now inhibited development progress in Downtown Shreveport. This is not to suggest, by any means, that there is a vacuum or that "nature" will move in to solve the problem. People must shape the city's future--the people who are Shreveport's government, business, professional, civic and community leaders.

If they are really persuaded that the concept of Downtown development is at the top of the area's agenda, it will be necessary for these leaders to create a structure (or structures) through which to focus their concerns, their energies and their resources - and to carry out their plans.

Unless, somehow, the functions and powers of the several branches of the city government--and relevant functions of the parish government--can be coordinated through a virtually independent and fully professional downtown development mechanism, we do not believe there is the capability here of achieving the suggested objectives.

Similarly, forces in the private enterprise system need to be channeled into and through a single-purpose entity, concentrating exclusively on the subject at hand and as immune as possible from conflicting and competing pressures.

There are cities where the dominant and effective operating instrument is a public agency or authority and where a private organization is missing entirely.

There are cities where the principal actor is a strong private - sector organization with the prime function of assuring that public actions and policies are coordinated effectively.

There are cities with twin and closely-relating private and public agencies.

There are public downtown agencies that receive private contributions in cash and in kind (or that levy special taxes on affected properties). There are private agencies--non-profit, of course--that receive public funds through grants or contracts for services and use these funds for public purposes.

The range of possible models is almost limitless, and Shreveport will have to make its own selection among them. The Team, however, suggests that, within the next few weeks, the Mayor, all Commissioners, Parish Police Jury President and one or more representatives of the banking, utility, downtown real estate, retail, corporate headquarters and communications groupings, among others--plus nearby residential communities and institutions--constitute themselves as a Committee with

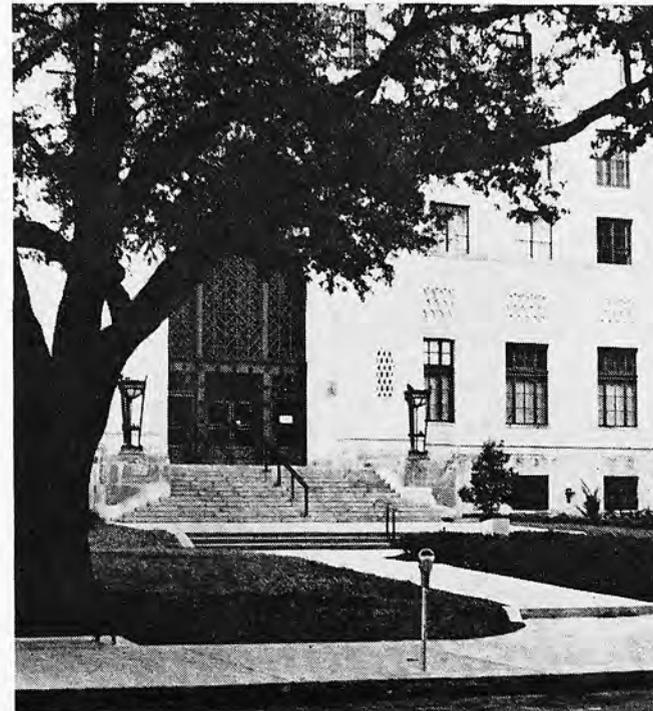
the first purpose, within a few additional weeks, of forming a Downtown Development Corporation. It may be advisable or necessary for the elected public officials to be sitting in ex officio capacity but it is essential that they participate.

The purpose of such a non-profit corporation would be to undertake specific development ventures, such as the acquisition of older structures for rehabilitation for retail or residential use, as recommended above. In the case of residential development, for example, such a corporation could become the sponsor of housing subsidized under Title II of the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and it could assist in carrying out Shreveport's Housing Assistance Plan required under that Act. It could acquire land and develop it for well-planned non-subsidized (or partially subsidized) residential development, or the city could acquire land, with federal community development block grant funds for subsequent disposal to the Downtown Corporation for residential development. The corporation might assist in the drafting of zoning proposals to assure that appropriate controls are maintained by the city on residential development.

In the case of retail re-use, the corporation might contract with the city to receive federal funds to

acquire and rehabilitate such structures for later lease or resale. The operational possibilities and legal requirements would have to be further explored in all of these regards, but most laws can be changed where legitimate public purposes are being pursued.

The Downtown Corporation could be given a contract by the city, for example, to prepare a design plan for the visual improvement of existing parking lots, new elements of the streetscape and other facets of an urban design policy for the Downtown area.



The primary source of corporation funding would be private, but public officials should be involved ex officio in setting its policy. It should obtain the best staff and consultant help for carrying out pre-stated official development policy and plans.

Past experience suggests that such a non-profit private entity with strong public involvement can become the stimulator of new investment, a "go-between" for potential outside investment in the community, a mediator between community and private goal setting and a "megaphone" to promote the virtues of Downtown development to residents of the region. With a few discrete development objectives achieved, it can become the basis for continuous re-examination of the development program and its adjustment to meet changing realities of Shreveport, the region and the national economy.

We recognize that a Downtown organization is not a new idea in Shreveport. But we conceive of this mechanism as one that focuses on a few selected development objectives that are attainable rather than taking on so comprehensive a mission that nothing gets done. We also believe that without public support and participation in the effort, no private mechanism of the sort envisioned here can succeed.

Organizing for the Future. Whether or not the particular recommendations of this report are adopted, it should be clear that some type of program is going to be necessary to accomplish a better Downtown in Shreveport. Because opportunities, problems and conditions will continue to change, the program eventually selected should be viewed as a process as opposed to a plan. If a Downtown Development Corporation is established, it will eventually be striving to achieve development objectives in addition to those recommended here.

In our opinion, future Downtown objectives should consist of easily understood statements related to encouraging what is good about the area and discouraging what is wrong. One approach to this is to:

- a. Determine the viability of certain Downtown functions such as we have already identified in this report;
- b. Review trends occurring in each function, both nationally and in the Shreveport Area to weigh their implications for the future of Downtown;
- c. Discuss alternative specific responses to trends and their possible implications;

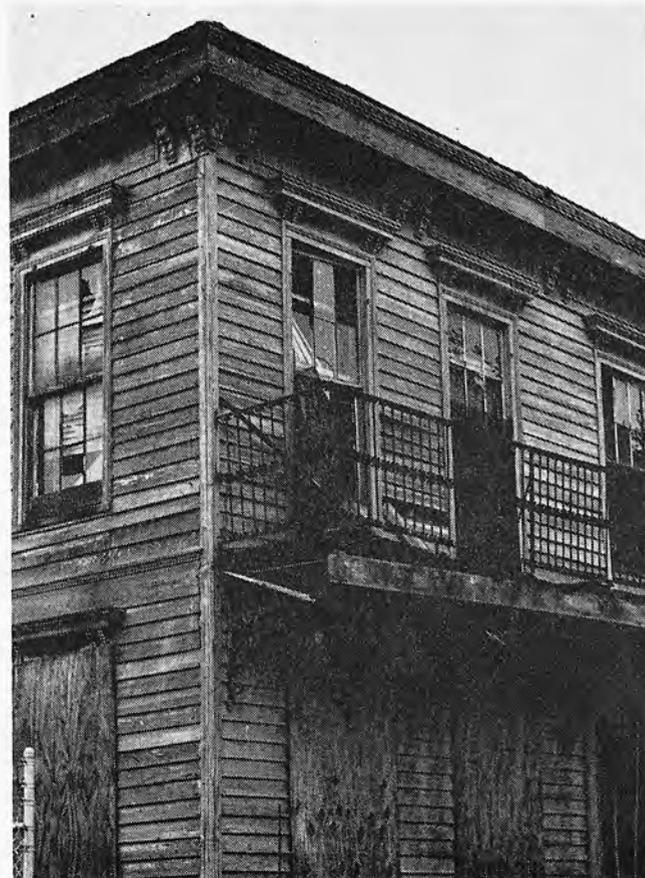
- d. Set goals that achieve the desired response;
- e. Establish a set of implementation guidelines to accomplish the goal. Implementation guidelines generally indicate the desired activity and give specifics of what the city or private sector are being asked to do to achieve the goal.

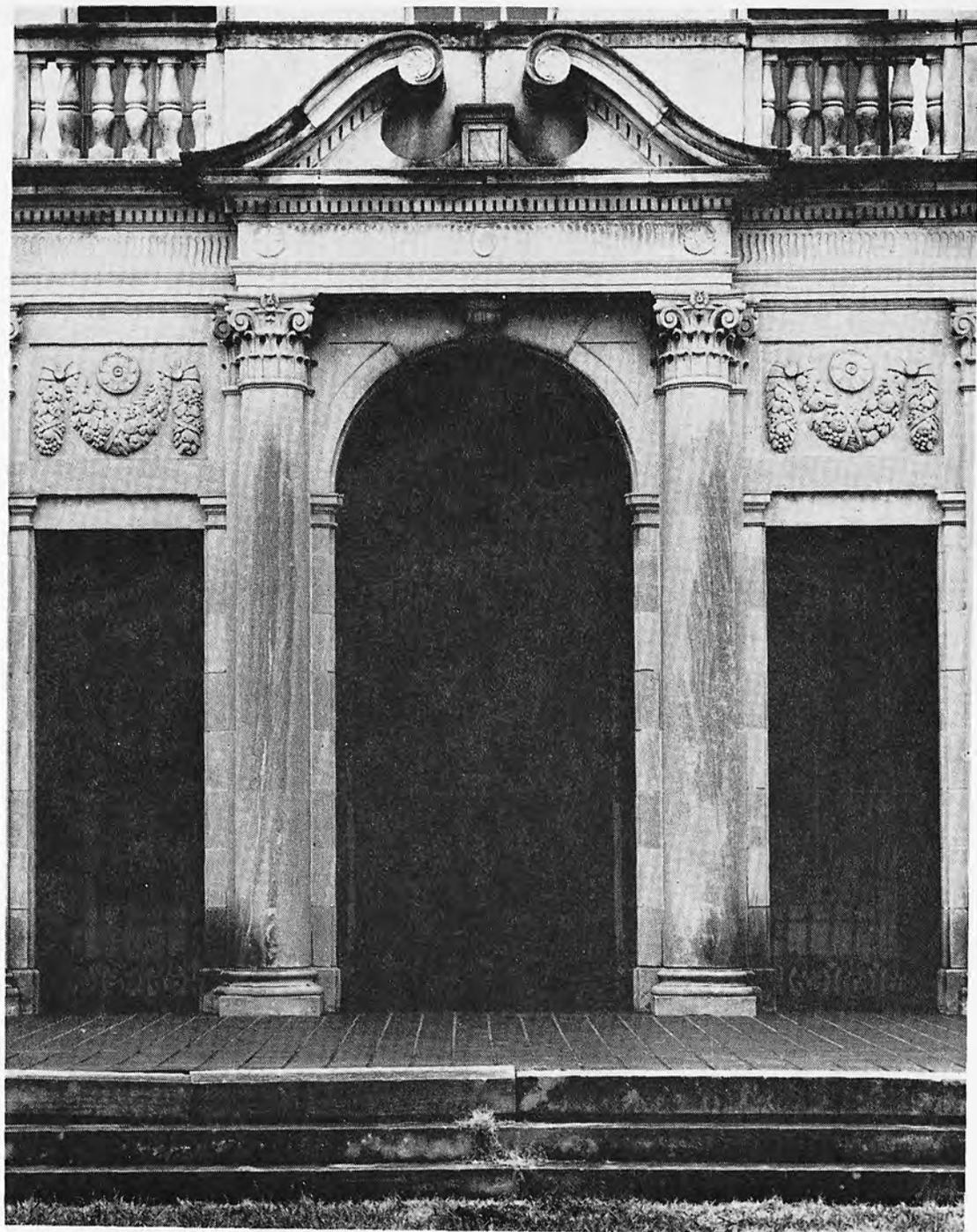
What this goal and guidelines process encourages is the recognition that the city government and private sector should work together on the improvement of the Downtown. This approach also helps show the general public that such public-private coordination is in the best interest of all the citizens and a legitimate activity of local government.

Finally, it should be recognized that local government has well-defined financial and legal limitations on what it can accomplish. We restate this obvious point because it is the basis for our contention that:

- * The legal and financial resources that are available must be maximized;
- * Public-private coordination is critical to undertaking any serious program;

- * City funds must be used to leverage private investment as that is where the real money is;
- * Key activities should be identified where the city should take the initiative and serve as a catalyst for private action.





BACKGROUND INFORMATION

R/UDAT PROGRAM

The Urban Planning and Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects has been responding to community requests by sending Urban Design Assistance Teams to various American cities since 1967.

The Shreveport Team is the 26th such team to be invited into a specific area to deal with environmental and urban problems that range in scale from a region to a small town, and in type from recreational areas to public policy and implementation methods.

The Teams respond to the problems as described by the local AIA Chapters and their sponsors from the community leadership.

Each Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team is especially selected to include professionals experienced in the particular problems of the area under study. Members are not compensated for their service and agree not to accept commissions for their work resulting from their recommendations.

The Team acquaints itself with the community and its people...presents its analysis from a fresh perspective.. offers its recommendations...perhaps a new approach for planning or for action.

THIS VISIT

The request for a Shreveport R/UDAT Team was approved in October, 1974. In December Archibald C. Rogers, Team chairman and Ronald A. Straka, national R/UDAT program chairman, made a reconnaissance visit to Shreveport to meet city and parish officials and members of the business community to discuss the details of the Team's visit. A Team was organized and was sent extensive background material on Shreveport and Caddo Parish. On February 14-17 the Team made its visit. After meetings with city, parish and state officials and planners, civic leaders and interested citizen groups, the Team surveyed the city by bus, air, and on foot.

With this information, the Team engaged in intensive work sessions, which culminated in a press conference and a public presentation on February 17.

This report was presented at that time.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the R/UDAT Program are:

- to improve physical design throughout the nation
- to illustrate the importance of urban and regional planning
- to stimulate public action
- to give national support to local AIA Chapters in their efforts to improve their own communities and become actively involved in urban design and planning issues.

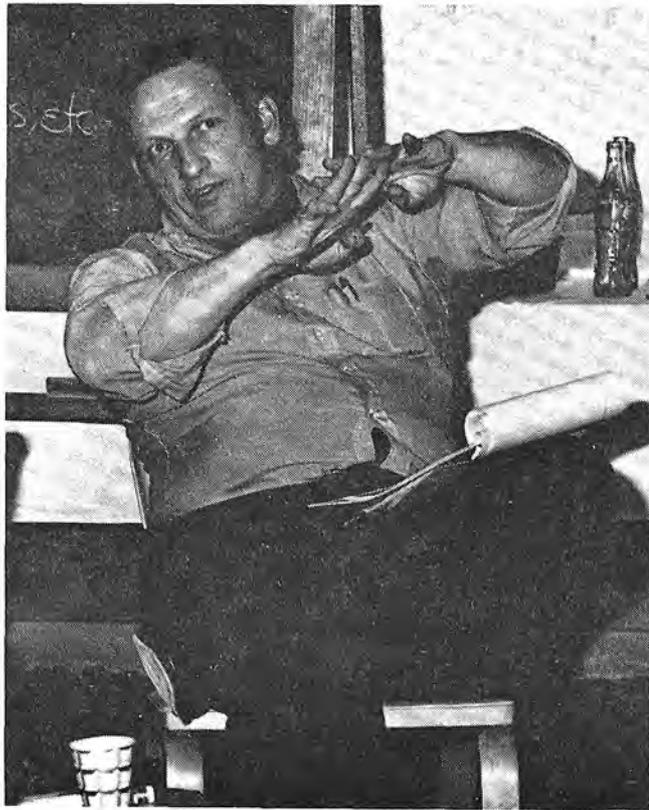
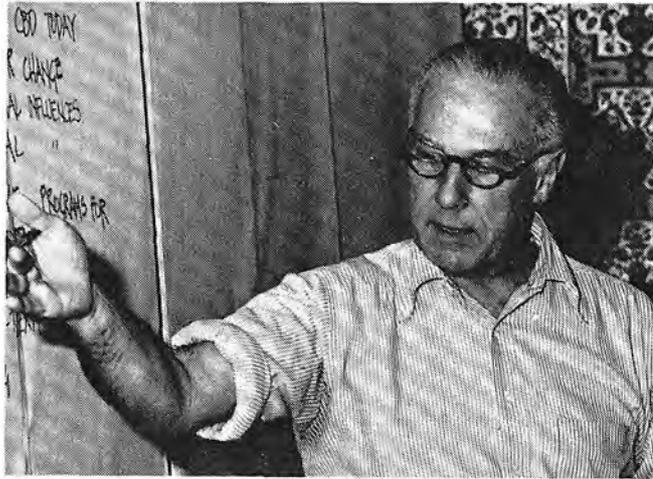
An assistance Team cannot provide detailed analyses, or solutions to complex problems in the four-day visit, but it can objectively approach long standing problems with a new look by experienced outsiders.

SPONSORSHIP

The request to the AIA was accompanied by letters of interest and support from city and parish officials, the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Development Task Force, local radio and TV stations, newspapers and magazines, various local organizations and concerned citizens of Shreveport.

Financial support for the expenses of the R/UDAT visit and this published report were underwritten by the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce, City of Shreveport, Downtown Shreveport Unlimited, Commercial National Bank, First National Bank and the Shreveport Chapter of the AIA and their friends.





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Architect, urban designer, lecturer,
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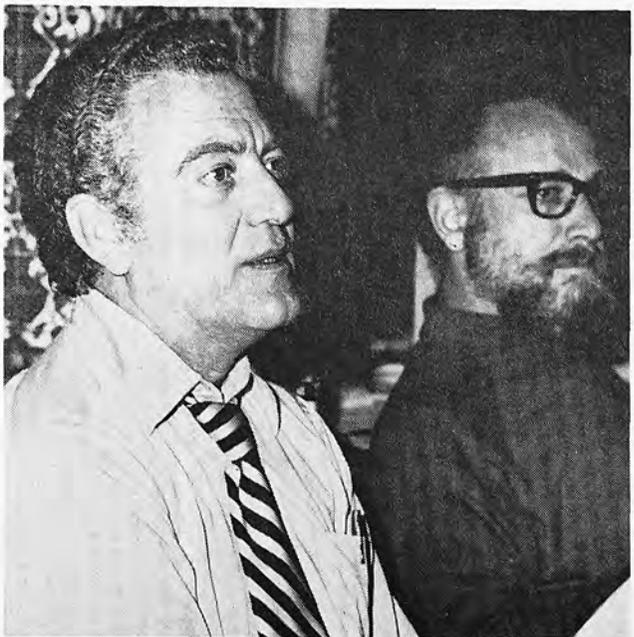
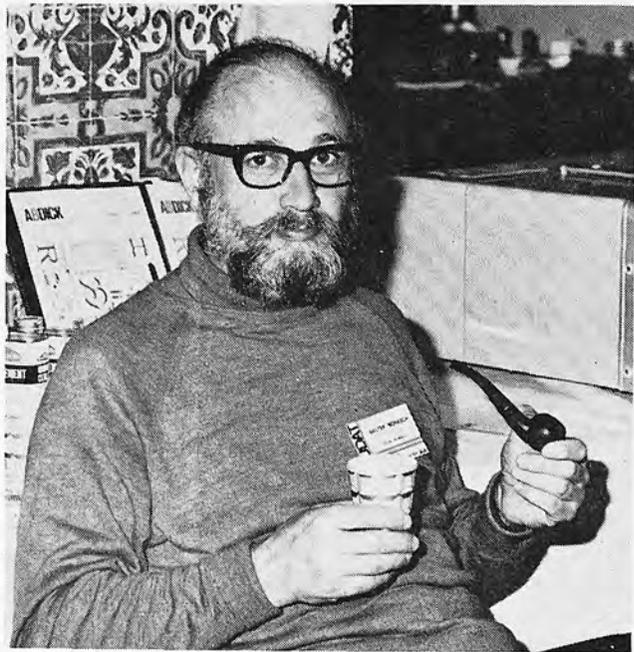
National Chairman: AIA R/UDAT Program

Architect, urban designer, lecturer,
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Vice-chairman, AIA Urban Planning and
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Lane and Edson, P.C.
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Attorney, teacher, author who has
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Planning Director
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Past President
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Downtown Brooklyn Development Association, Inc.
President-Elect
International Downtown Executives Association
Brooklyn, New York

Development executive representing the major businesses of the commercial-institutional-governmental center of New York's largest borough.

RICHARD E. STARR

Principal Counselor
Real Estate Research Corporation
Chicago, Illinois

Economist, lecturer, author, planning and development consultant who has been involved in both the public and private sector as liaison between federal government and local communities. He has served as Director of Housing Development for the City of Chicago and as team leader for the Cincinnati Housing Strategy Program and as consultant to other major U.S. cities.

CY WAGNER

Wagner/Kafka & Associates
Austin, Texas

Architect, urban designer, teacher who has been involved in many major award winning urban design and planning projects such as - Hemisphere '68 and San Antonio River Corridor Study. He has served as a consultant to the public and private sector in establishing urban design criteria and guide lines for land use, housing, pedestrian movement systems and the rehabilitation and redevelopment of river front communities.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The R/UDAT visit was coordinated by William S. Evans, AIA of the Shreveport Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The Shreveport R/UDAT Executive Committee members assisting with the local arrangements, fact-finding, public relations and coordination are architects Lester C. Haas, FAIA; G. Scott Smitherman, FAIA; Jesse O. Morgan, FAIA; Bill Wiener, Jr., AIA; Jonathan M. Evans, AIA; B.J. Massey, AIA; and the members of the Shreveport Chapter.

Members of the team were assisted by Duncan Alford and Richard Cleveland, of Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, and Jim Gadra, Kim Mitchell and Kent Reeves of Louisiana Tech, Ruston, -- arranged for and coordinated by Joe Middleton of the Shreveport Chapter.

Secretarial services were contributed by members of the Architectural Secretaries Association. A Special Documentary is being prepared by Tom Whitehead of Northwestern State University, Natchitoches.

An important contribution to the study was the active interest and participation of the federal, parish and city agencies, especially George Parsons and his planning staff; elected officials; business and civic leaders; and many concerned citizens representing a cross-section of the entire community.

The Shreveport Chapter of the AIA wishes to express particular appreciation for the material contributions of the City of Shreveport, Downtown Shreveport Unlimited, the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce, the First National Bank and the Commercial National Bank.



RESOURCE DATA

City of Shreveport
Metropolitan Planning Commission
Department of Public Works
Department of Utilities
Downtown Shreveport Unlimited
Shreveport Chamber of Commerce
Downtown Development Committee

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Louisiana Highway Department
Metropolitan Planning Commission
Howard, Needles, Tammen &
Bergendoff Plan
Arch Winter Plans
Riverfront Development
Bossier City Master Plan
Port Authority
Shreveport Airport Authority
Shreve Memorial Library Board
Caddo Tax Assessor
Caddo Parish Police Jury

ORGANIZATIONS

Citizens Capital Improvements Comm.
Convention and Tourist Bureau
Shreve Area Council of Local
Governments
Historic Preservation Society
Junior League of Shreveport
League of Women Voters
Louisiana State Fair
Negro Chamber of Commerce
Police - Community Relations
Red River Valley Association
Shreveport Beautification Foundation
Shreveport Junior Chamber of Commerce

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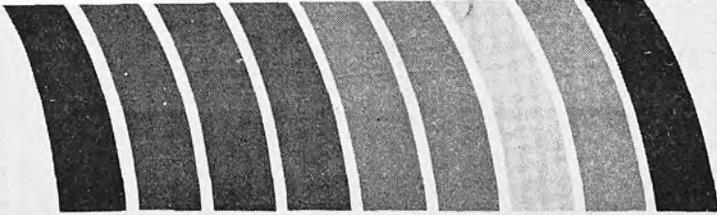
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Now or Never

Key Recommendations

1. Create immediate momentum through "quick victory" projects to upgrade the environment.
2. Establish an organizational structure to focus the powers and responsibilities of governmental departments on downtown development goals. Create a companion private-sector organization with a single-purpose dedication to downtown development. Or, blend the two forces into one agency.
3. Arrange for the "recycling" of downtown buildings and groups of buildings having a substantial quality and character.
4. Facilitate downtown living through the recycling effort and ultimately through new construction of low-rise residential complexes.
5. Improve the appearance and comfort level of parking lots.
6. Beautify the streetscape and create a pedestrian precinct of high quality.
7. Expand on the existing strengths, positive trends and readily available opportunities -- in, among others, the commitment of banks to downtown headquarters, the Shreve Square activity and the waterfront potential.



Rainbows End here.