

The Entertainment District Project Report

Buffalo, New York July, 1978



The Honorable James D. Griffin, Mayor of the City of Buffalo, in the Heart of the District as it is today. On either side are drawings showing the buildings as they will look in the future.

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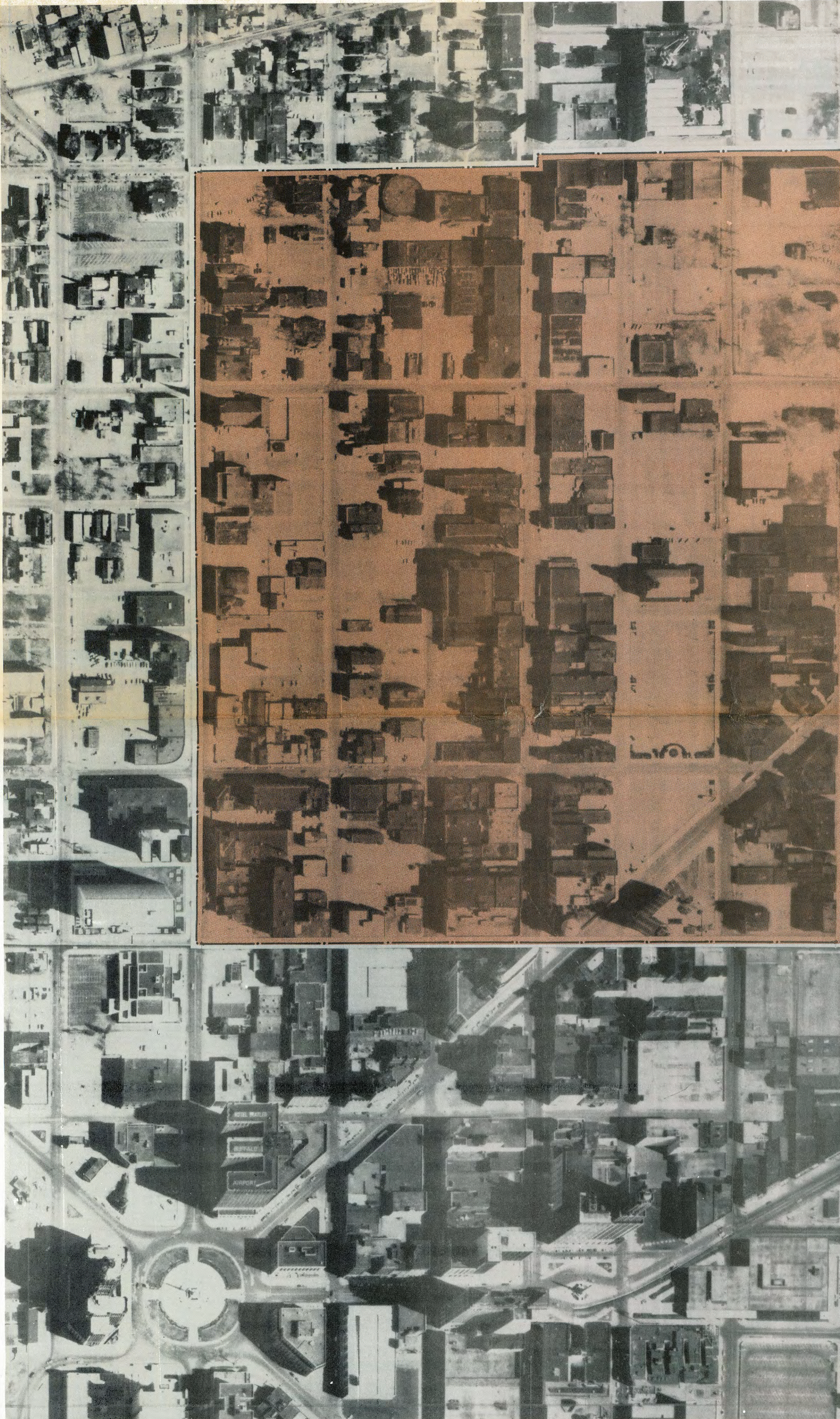
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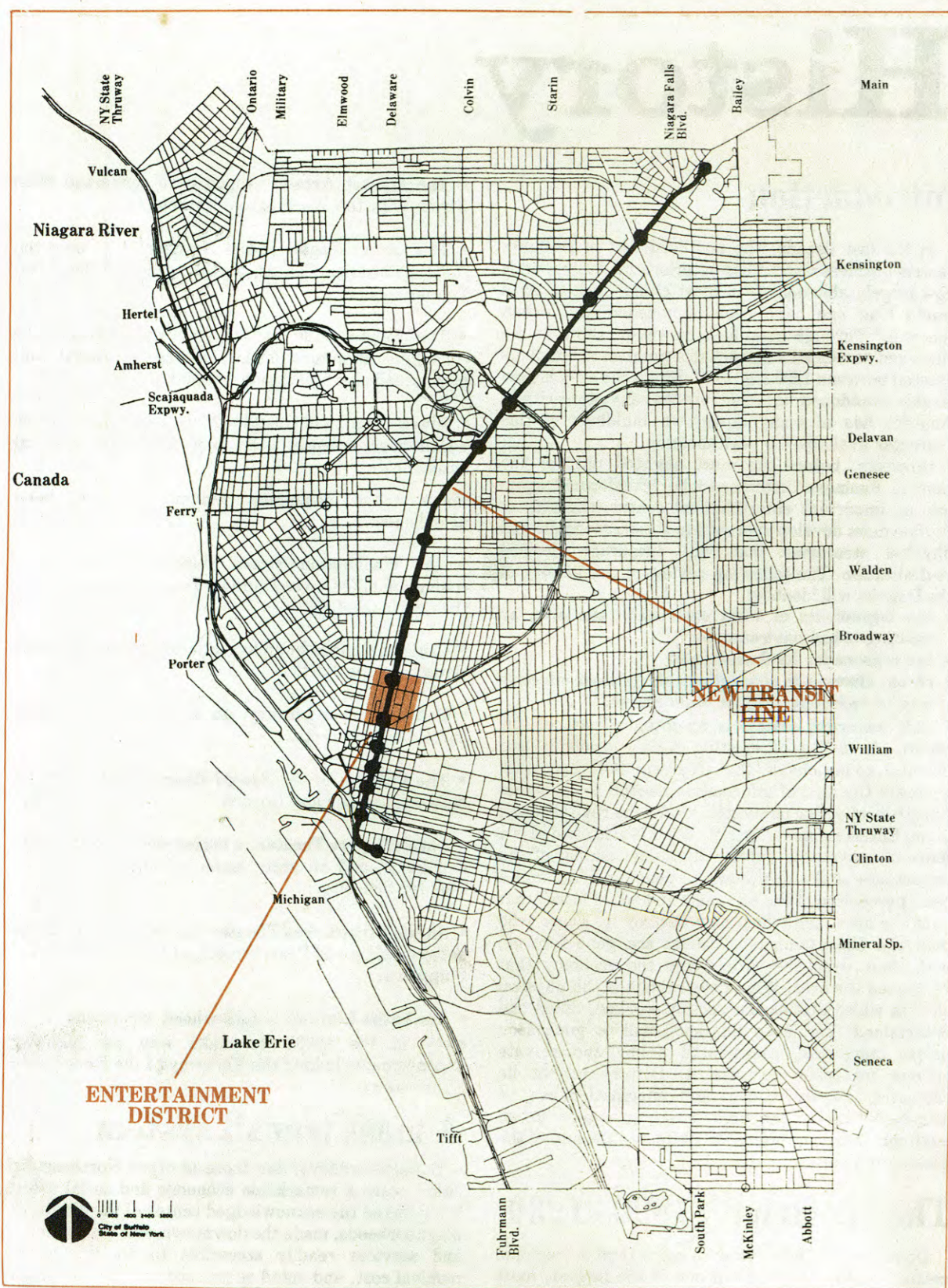
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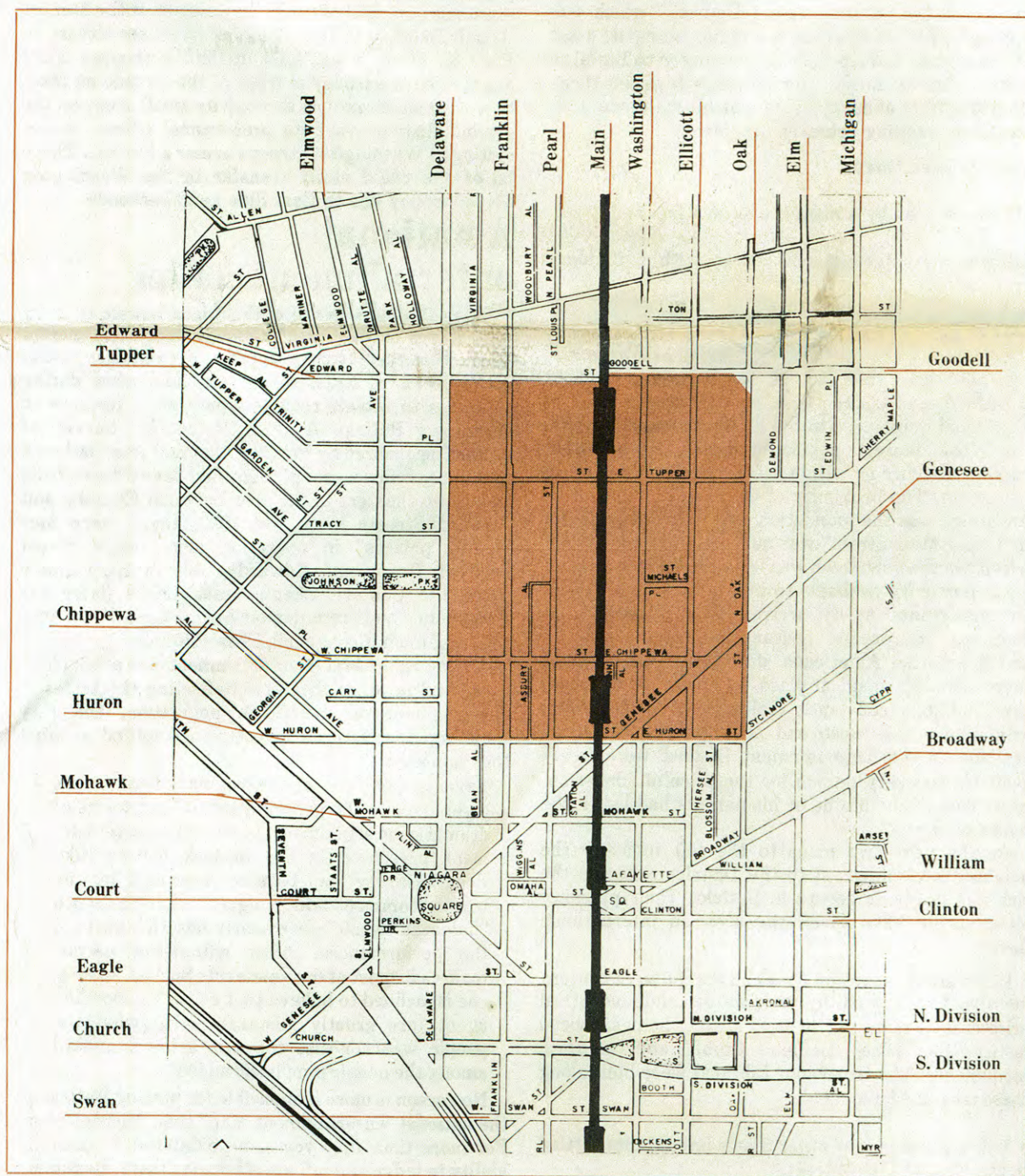
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*Downtown aerial
Indicating project boundaries*



City of Buffalo



Downtown Buffalo



Downtown Buffalo from the north east
Showing Kensington Expressway and cleared site for Elm-Oak Arterial in foreground with Central Business District top left and Entertainment District top right.

Introduction

Preface

The reestablishment of an Entertainment District in Downtown Buffalo is potentially one of the biggest, most innovative and exciting urban development efforts in the United States. The area comprises one hundred and six acres, more than half of the city's central business district, including the nineteen most decayed and abandoned blocks of the city's center.

With the construction of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's light rail rapid transit system and a public commitment to economic development, the prospect of revitalization and reinvestment in the Entertainment District has never been greater. The citizens of Buffalo have an opportunity to create a unique urban environment which will enhance the quality of city life and act as a magnet to draw people back into the City. The Entertainment District is an investment and an expression of confidence in Buffalo's future.

On the other hand, we must caution that optimism will not be translated automatically into action. While many improvements are possible in the next twelve months, it will be years before the transformation of "Upper Main Street" is complete. In the meantime, difficult decisions must be made to create a climate that will bring legitimate entrepreneurs and developers back to downtown Buffalo. More than any time in this City's recent past, Buffalo's residents, its business community and its political leaders all recognize that they must be prepared to assume responsibility for these decisions.

The preparation of this report would have been impossible without the assistance and cooperation of officials and professionals in a score of city, county, regional, state and federal agencies. Personal thanks are impossible, but the Entertainment District Project staff commends these public servants for their frankness and courtesy. We also thank the Theater District Association and the hundreds of individual citizens, neighborhood groups, businessmen, and arts organizations who told us what they would like to see in their Entertainment District.

Background

In the fall of 1977, Mayor-Elect James D. Griffin was asked by area businessmen to consider Upper Main Street as a target for his new economic development program. In November, 1977, he asked the School of Architecture and Environmental Design at the State University of New York at Buffalo to study the feasibility of reestablishing a regional

entertainment center in the area roughly bounded by Delaware Avenue and the Elm-Oak Arterial, north from Huron to Edward Street. In the Mayor's opinion, what was needed was (1) a short-term, independent, professional assessment of the feasibility of redevelopment, (2) a systematic analysis of data about economic, social and physical conditions in the proposed project area, and (3) suggestions for a coherent urban design framework which would guide the Mayor in his decisions to invest limited public funds in developing the Entertainment District. This report is the product of a four-month study conducted for the City of Buffalo's Department of Community Development by the School of Architecture and Environmental Design.

Organization

The Entertainment District Project is a cooperative effort of persons from several of the School of Architecture and Environmental Design Departments, as well as other divisions within the university. Our performance was periodically reviewed by a Technical Advisory Board consisting of representatives of other university departments, and of city, county and regional agencies which have significant roles in downtown development. To ensure that the Project received accurate information on community opinion, we also created a User Advisory Board consisting of representatives of landowners in the study area, the arts community, ethnic groups, area student associations and the business community. We have incorporated many of their ideas into our planning.

Approach

The Entertainment District Project did not provide architectural services to any individual client. We have created an urban design framework within which future individual architectural decisions can be made. Although time and funding were limited, our scope of investigation covered the areas we had projected at the onset of the program.

Our report should not be considered a rigid scheme which cannot be adapted to changing conditions or which dictates final courses of action to officials and the citizens of Buffalo. This is a conceptual document. It assembles and organizes objective information about the concerned District. This document presents a flexible framework that offers the City intelligent choices about the future of the area.

Our report does not include a conventional market analysis. Such a study would tend to show declining

demand for real estate in the project area based on recent trends. Our belief is that a "market" can be created once a coherent development strategy is adopted by the City of Buffalo. Detailed marketing questions are left to the next stage in the development of the District when decisions are clear and individual land parcels are ready to be developed.

We have not attempted to identify the expected economic impact of new public works on the project area. Such applied research is currently being conducted by several urban planning organizations: The Greater Buffalo Development Foundation (GBDF) is developing a system to predict economic change in the Central Business District; The Erie County Industrial Development Agency is working on an economic development master plan for Erie County; consultants for the Urban Mass Transit Administration recently completed a report on economic development opportunities along the rapid transit line. We have recognized and incorporated some of this material into our planning.

Our approach was to: GATHER and compile accurate, up-to-date information about past and present physical, social and economic conditions in the project area. IDENTIFY what we consider to be unique characteristics of the area which have potential for long-term revitalization. ISOLATE the economic, social and physical components of a comprehensive plan utilizing these unique characteristics; and PRESENT this information and our suggestions in a way that will guide policy-makers and inform debate over the future of the District, and permit intelligent choice among the alternatives facing the community.

Goals for the area

Our mandate is to present in broad outline the major elements for a long-term development plan for Buffalo's Entertainment District. This led us to consider a range of goals beyond those normally associated with conventional urban design and planning. These include:

ECONOMIC GOALS

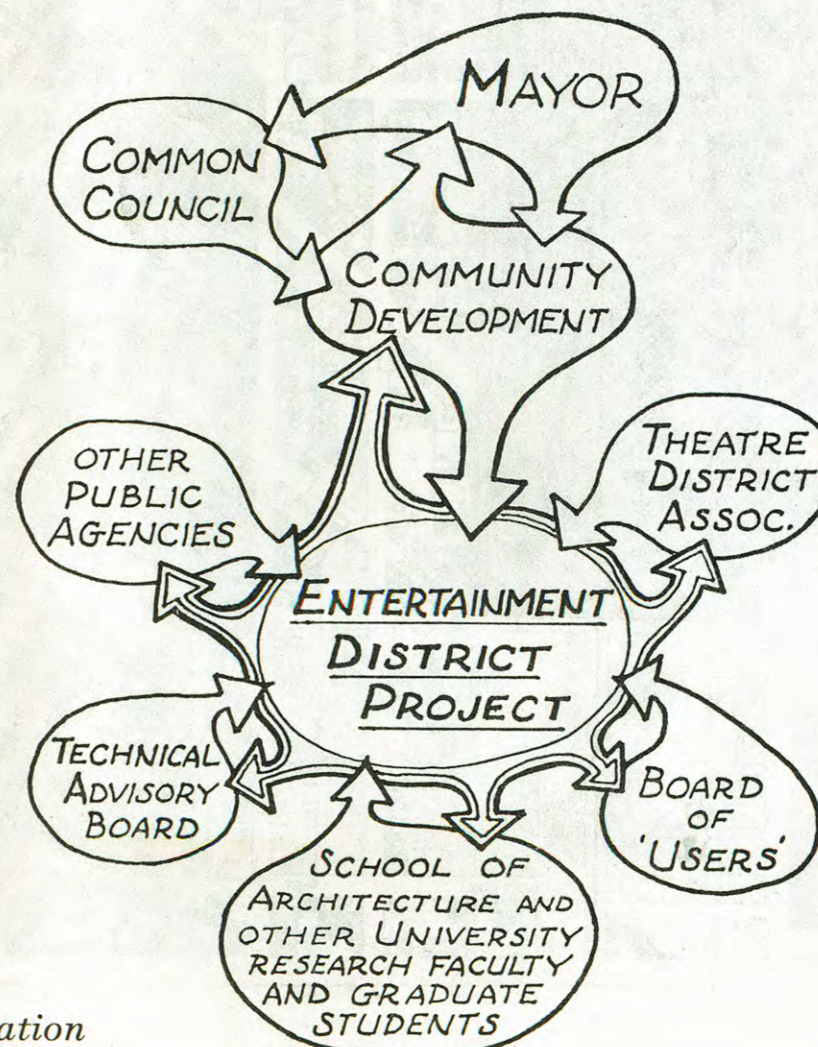
- CREATING new permanent jobs in the private sector, especially for persons of low and moderate income;
- ADDING to the City's property tax base to support City-wide services, including the preservation of as much existing private ownership and economic activity as possible;
- SUPPORTING regional economic plans by strengthening the service sector in the Downtown economy;
- ATTRACTING new economic generators and appropriate new uses to the Central Business District;
- COMPETING effectively with suburban areas and other cities for limited investment funds.

SOCIAL GOALS:

- IMPROVING the quality of the urban environment by encouraging the expansion and growth of cultural activities in the Downtown area;
- SERVING as a showcase for the City of Buffalo's rich ethnic and cultural heritage;
- CREATING a place where all of the City's residents will have a sense of belonging, a sense of pride in their accomplishments, and in their City.

PHYSICAL GOALS:

- DEVELOPING an attractive, visually exciting urban environment in the downtown;
- PRESERVING existing historic and aesthetic landmarks in the area;
- PROVIDING safe, weather-protected pedestrian flow throughout the area.
- INCORPORATING adequate parking and vehicular access to the area.
- ASSURING coordination of District development with existing and proposed area-wide regional physical plans.



Project Organization

History

Introduction

In the last decade, the northern half of Buffalo's central business district has deteriorated badly, and is now largely abandoned. In most cities, such an area would long ago have been demolished for "urban renewal." Through good luck, however, the area we surveyed contained a remarkable number of buildings erected between 1890 and 1930. While the area is now largely abandoned, it is unlikely that any other city in America has so many downtown buildings of this character available for revitalization.

However, before the most blighted part of the Central Business District can be transformed again into an important entertainment center, the City of Buffalo must develop appropriate social, economic and physical strategies that will encourage desired revitalization. The following review of the history of the District will identify:

- the ingredients of what once made the area an exciting urban environment;
- the reasons for its decline; and
- recent changes in conceptions of the most effective way to redevelop "Upper Main Street."

This historical review is an integral part of our report. A survey of existing social, economic and physical conditions in the area will not, by itself, generate the kind of information needed to construct sensitive, effective public policies for the revitalization of the Entertainment District. What is also needed is a sense of community values, an understanding of the importance of the downtown in people's lives, and a clear perception of the economic and social forces that built the area, and which now destroy it. Those who built the Entertainment District are gone forever; with them went the society and the economy that supported the area. What does remain is the physical shell in which that earlier society worked, dined and entertained. Yet, even this shell will be gone soon unless immediate, coordinated public and private actions are taken to save it. History cannot be recreated, but investment and imagination can be attracted back to the area, creating a new urban environment, appropriate for Buffalo at the end of the Twentieth Century.

The "District", 1890 - 1930

Downtown Buffalo was once more than a "regional center," it was the heart of one of the largest, most important cities in America. It was a time when a decision to "shuffle off" to the "Queen City of the Great Lakes" was not treated as a joke. Many came only to see the "Entertainment District," which was an integral part of downtown, a major economic asset for the region, and a principal contributor to Buffalo's positive national image. Our research revealed three important facts about the area which once made it an attractive, exciting urban environment:

- People lived there;
- It was served by a mass transit system; and
- It was an entertainment center with a national reputation.

Downtown neighborhoods

In 1930, more than 500,000 people lived in the City of Buffalo, and (as the first map indicates) most of them lived quite close to the Entertainment District. The most densely populated wards were within walking distance or within a brief trolley ride to the downtown. The proximity of these neighborhoods to downtown was the foundation on which economic life of "Upper Main Street" was built. It was a time when activity in the downtown was welcomed as a symbol of the opportunity available to immigrants in America. To immigrants newly arrived from Eastern and Southern European peasant villages, and to first-generation Americans, downtown Buffalo must have seemed a magical place — ablaze with lights, new buildings constantly being constructed, filled with people and noise and activity. The pleasures available in the Entertainment District were freely available to every person for the price of admission, regardless of the life he or his parents had led in the "Old Country."

As the next two maps to the left indicate, the neighborhoods adjacent to the District reflected the rich mix of ethnic groups in Buffalo. Their presence must surely have given the area an international flavor:

- Delaware Avenue and Franklin Street were centers for the City's wealthy mercantile and industrial aristocracy, many of whose major homes, social institutions (The Buffalo Club) and cultural monuments (The Grosvenor Library) were built along these tree-lined avenues.

- Poles, Russians and other Slavic immigrants settled to the East of Main Street.
- The center of the City's Greek community was in the first Hellenic Orthodox Church at 361 Oak Street.
- There was a center for the Jewish community on lower Broadway.

- Blacks who lived closed to Main, south of Broadway, moved into the Elm-Oak neighborhood during the 1930's and 1940's;
- The West Side of Main along the Pearl-Franklin blocks was a zone of higher density apartment hotels and boarding houses catering to a more transient market. Many of the performers appearing in theaters along Main lived there and entertained in Pearl Street's speakeasies and restaurants.

Landmarks

A few landmarks remain as somewhat forlorn reminders of the people who once lived near the district:

- St. Louis Church and the Teck Theater, (built by Jacob F. Schoellkopf in 1883 as a music hall -- it was called the "Teck" after Schoellkopf's home province in Germany), both symbols of the prosperity the Germans found in America.
- The ruined hulk of Grosvenor Library's round stacks building on Edward Street, once one of Buffalo's major cultural institutions.
- St. Michael's Church, the only Jesuit church in the City.

- The Market Arcade which once connected Main Street with the Washington Market.

- The former Eagles Lodge Number 116, now the Buffalo Christian Center, on the corner of Pearl and Tupper.

- The Pierce Building at 665 Main Street, the remaining structure of Dr. Pierce's Hospital and patent medicine fabrication complex.

- Several apartment buildings along Franklin Street which have recently been renovated with Federal assistance.

Many other prominent landmarks have been demolished:

- The Washington Street Market, the center of commercial life for the Elm-Oak neighborhood, sold by the City in the 1950's.

- Canisius College buildings adjacent to St. Michael's Church on the North.

- The Grosvenor Library on the corner of Franklin and Edward Streets.

- The Convent of the Sacred Heart on Washington between Tupper and Goodell.

- Shea's Gayety Theater, a burlesque house at Huron and Pearl, and an early home of the Studio Arena Theater School.

- Shea's Great Lakes Theater (later the Paramount) between Main and Pearl Streets, at the corner of West Chippewa.

- The entire Elm-Oak neighborhood which was swept away in the 1950's to make way for highway improvements linking the Thruway to the Kensington Expressway.

A mass transit system

Buffalo's trolleys, like those of other Northeastern cities, were a remarkable economic and social asset. They linked the acknowledged center of the city to its neighborhoods, made the downtown core's excitement and services readily accessible to all citizens at nominal cost, and acted as an economic stimulant for commercial development along their lines. The finest surviving example of the way in which the District's physical environment was shaped to profit from the economic potential of the trolley system is the Market Arcade Building at 617-619 Main Street (see picture on Page 5). When it was built in 1897, a shopper could alight from the trolley in front of the Arcade on Main Street, stroll in comfort through its small shops on the ground floor or visit its professional offices above, exiting at Washington Street Farmer's Market. There he or she could easily transfer to the Washington Street trolley line to East Side neighborhoods.

A national entertainment center

When Buffalo was one of the dozen largest cities in America, it had an entertainment district to match. There were theaters, restaurants, dance halls, pinball parlors, billiard halls, speakeasies and more daring pleasures to attract residents and out-of-towners to Downtown Buffalo. A 1925 "Recreation Survey of Buffalo" sponsored by the City Planning Association, a civil improvement group, identified seven dance halls and seven theaters in the area between Genesee and Edward Streets alone. By 1930, there were four "movie palaces" in operation along Main Street between Huron and Edward -- Shea's Hippodrome (later the Center); Shea's Great Lakes (later the Paramount, and since demolished); Shea's Teck; and, the most magnificent of all, Shea's Buffalo.

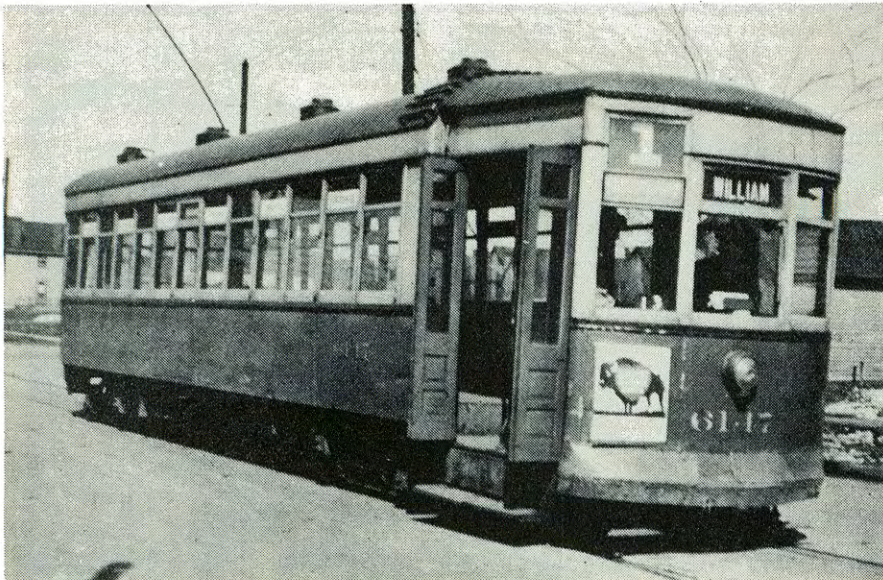
A wide range of live entertainment was available in these and in other theaters. Reflecting the tastes of one segment of the City's population, the City Planning Association's investigators sniffed at what they had seen:

Seventy per cent of the regular theaters are given over to the presentation of light forms of dramatic entertainment. Much of the entertainment presented in the burlesque houses (like Shea's Gayety) can best be described by the words "common" and "vulgar," while the word "indecent" would more nearly describe parts of the performances. After witnessing performances in most of the vaudeville burlesque houses, one is inclined to believe that either the booking agents are greatly mistaken as to what the people want or else there is a low standard among the people (emphasis added).

No person is more responsible for putting Buffalo on the national "entertainment map" than Michael Shea. For more than fifty years, he exhibited an uncanny ability to judge and influence popular taste. Beginning with a beer house in the 1880's, he first managed and then constructed the best vaudeville theaters in the City -- especially Shea's Court Street Theater, adjacent to Denton's Music Store, and Shea's Majestic, at Genesee and Pearl. These attracted the nation's most popular talent to Buffalo -- George M. Cohan, W. C. Fields, Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, Buster Keaton, and Louise Dresser, among others.

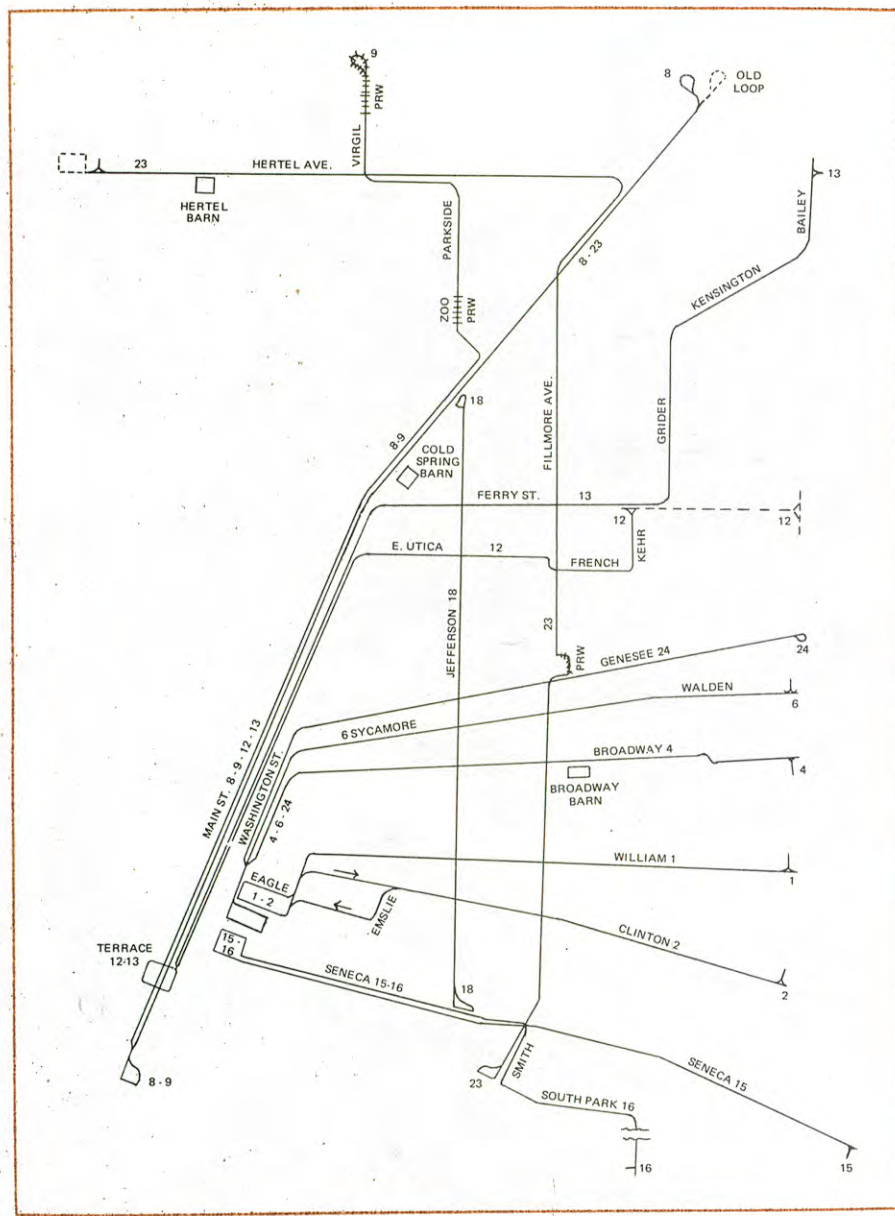
Shea was among the first to recognize the entertainment potential of motion pictures. In 1913, he built the Hippodrome (now the Center), the first Buffalo theater constructed primarily for the "movies." He continued to purchase and construct movie houses throughout the 1920's, at one time owning or managing every theater in Downtown Buffalo except the Lafayette. His masterwork was undoubtedly Shea's Buffalo Theater, now a national landmark and unquestionably the grandest entertainment facility in Western New York.

The presence of so much night life acted as a major economic generator for the City. Attracted by the presence of so many people in the arts, in music and the theater, many restaurants, music stores, dance academies, and theater supply outlets located along Upper Main Street and in surrounding blocks. The most prominent was the Tonawanda-based Wurlitzer Company, which built a large store near Shea's Buffalo. Pearl Street, an area of boarding houses and residential hotels, became known as "Back Stage Street," its speakeasies, gambling parlors and bawdy houses frequented by visiting performers, as well as by Buffalo's more adventurous residents. The atmosphere was undoubtedly enlivened by the presence each year of thousands of conventioners who were able to stay conveniently close to the area in the City's dozen, first-class hotels.



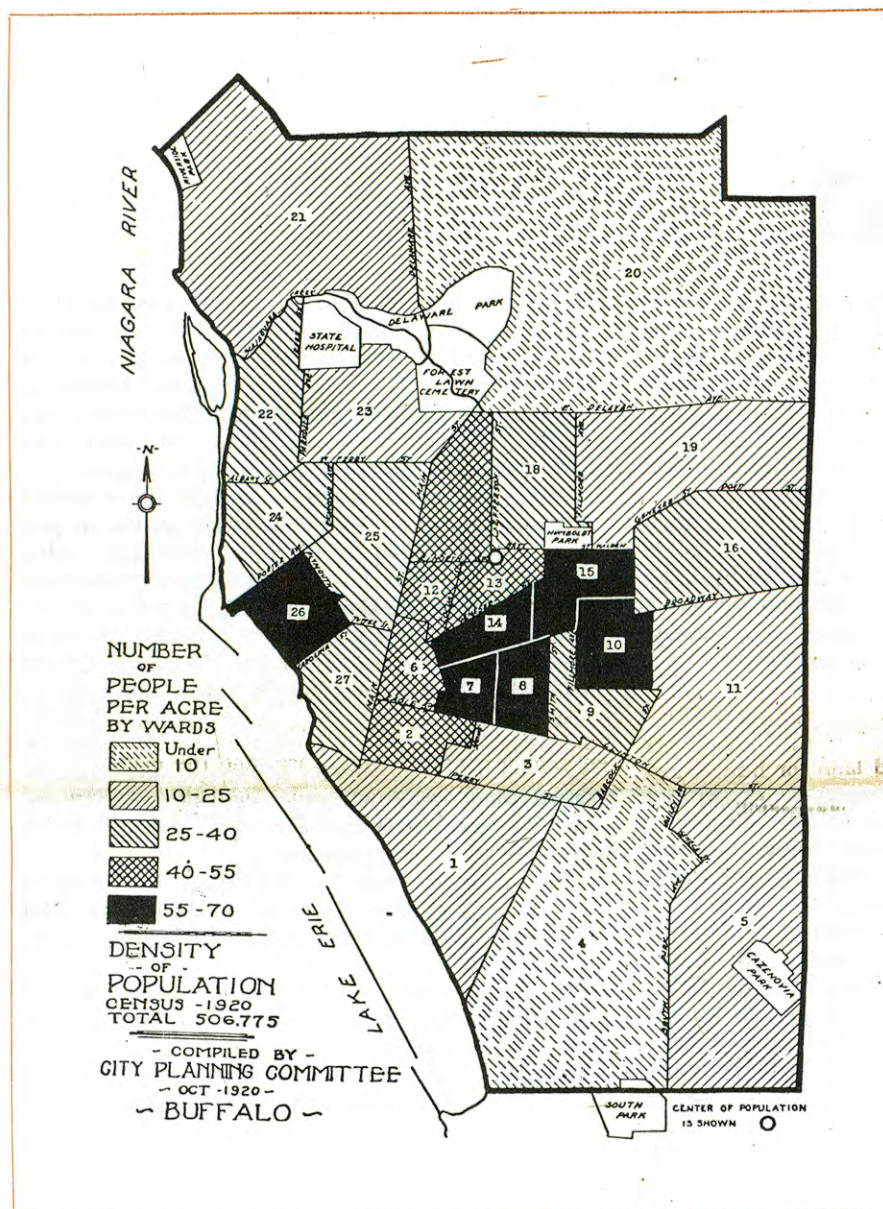
A typical trolley, 1940

Courtesy National Railway Historical Society

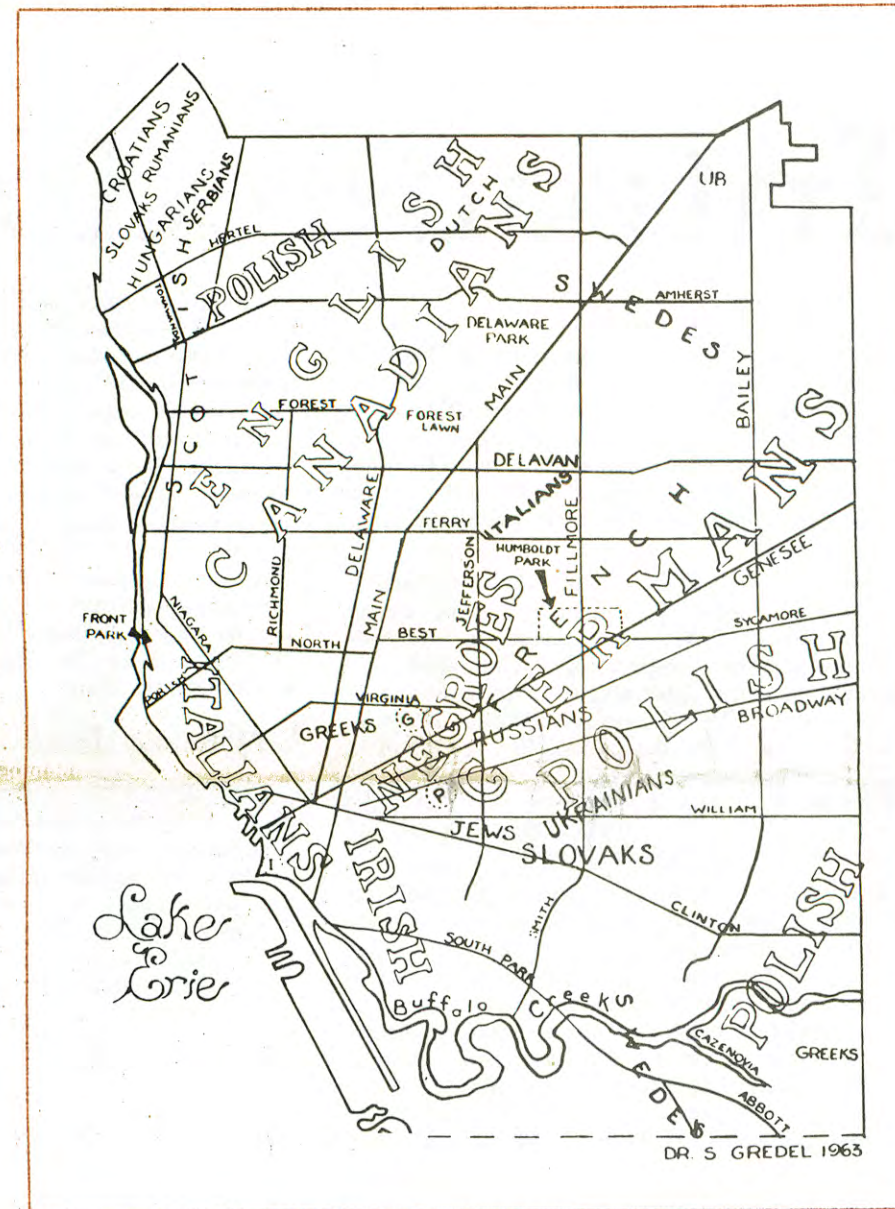


Trolley lines — 1940

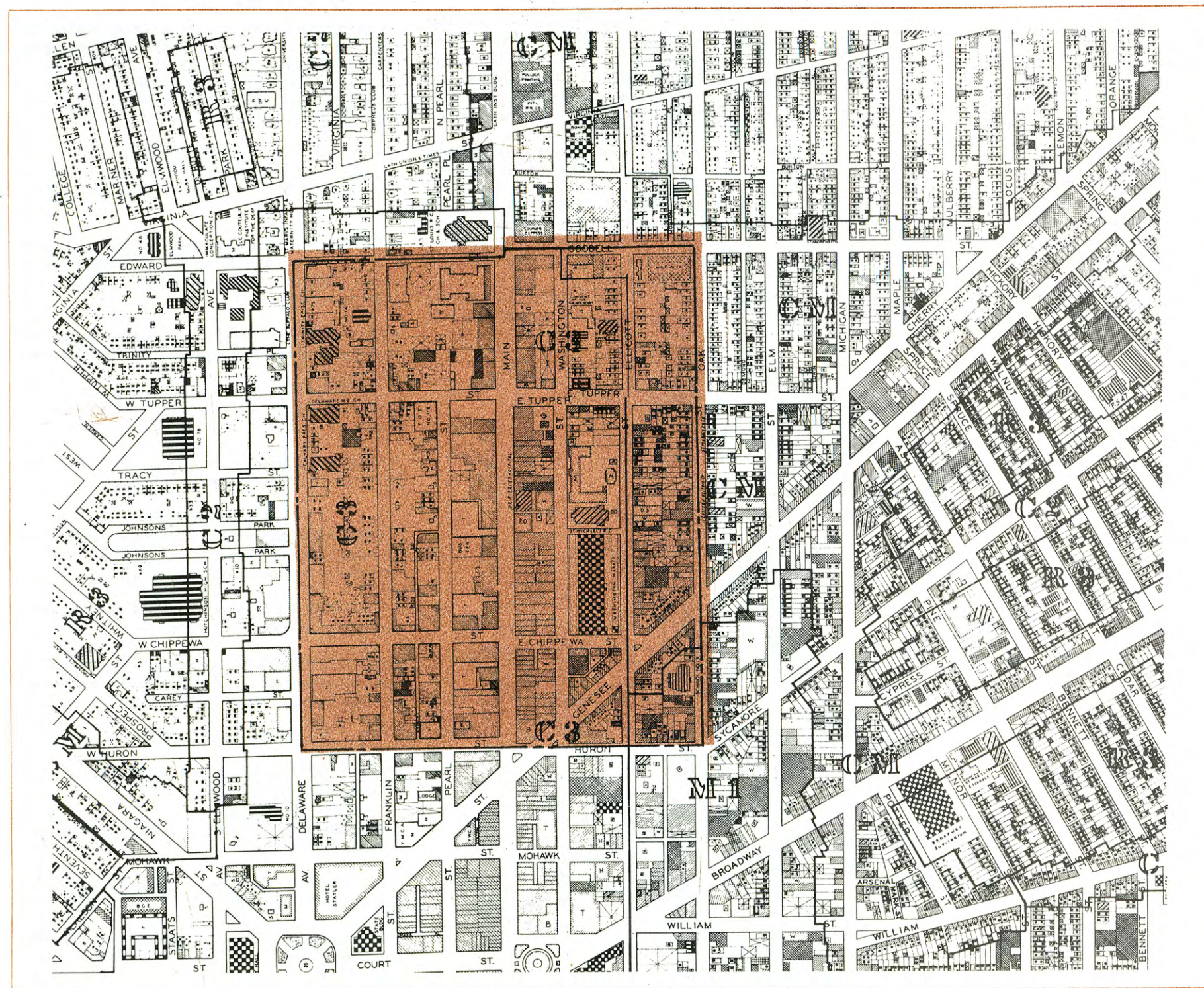
Courtesy National Railway Historical Society



Population density - 1920



Ethnic areas - 1900



The Urban Fabric - 1939

Courtesy City of Buffalo



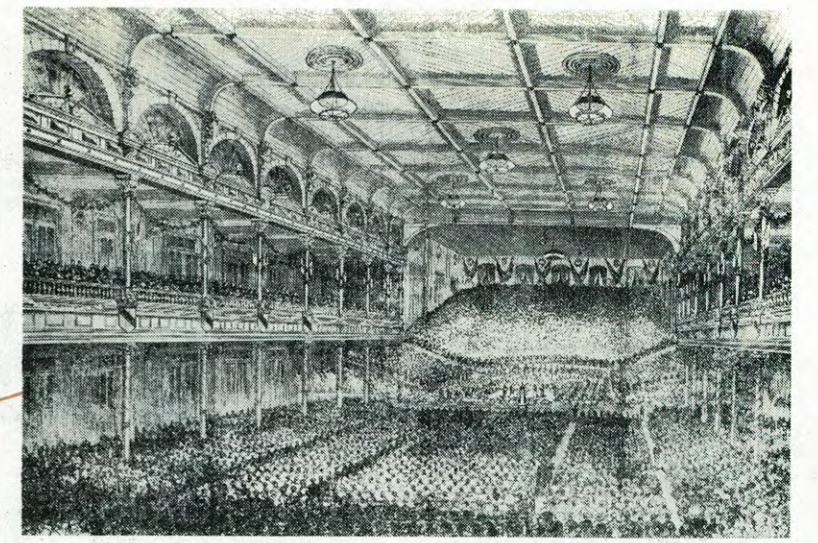
Grosvenor Library c. 1910

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society



German Music Hall c. 1885
Site of Teck Theater

Courtesy Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society



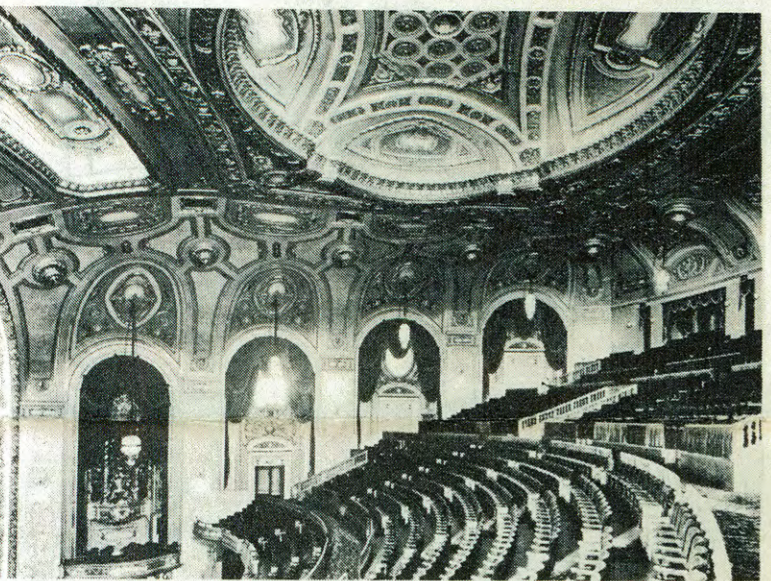
Teck Music Hall c. 1883

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society



Vernor Building c. 1954

Courtesy Buffalo Historical Society—Fitzgerald collection



Shea's Buffalo Theater c. 1930

Courtesy The Friends of the Buffalo Theater, Inc.



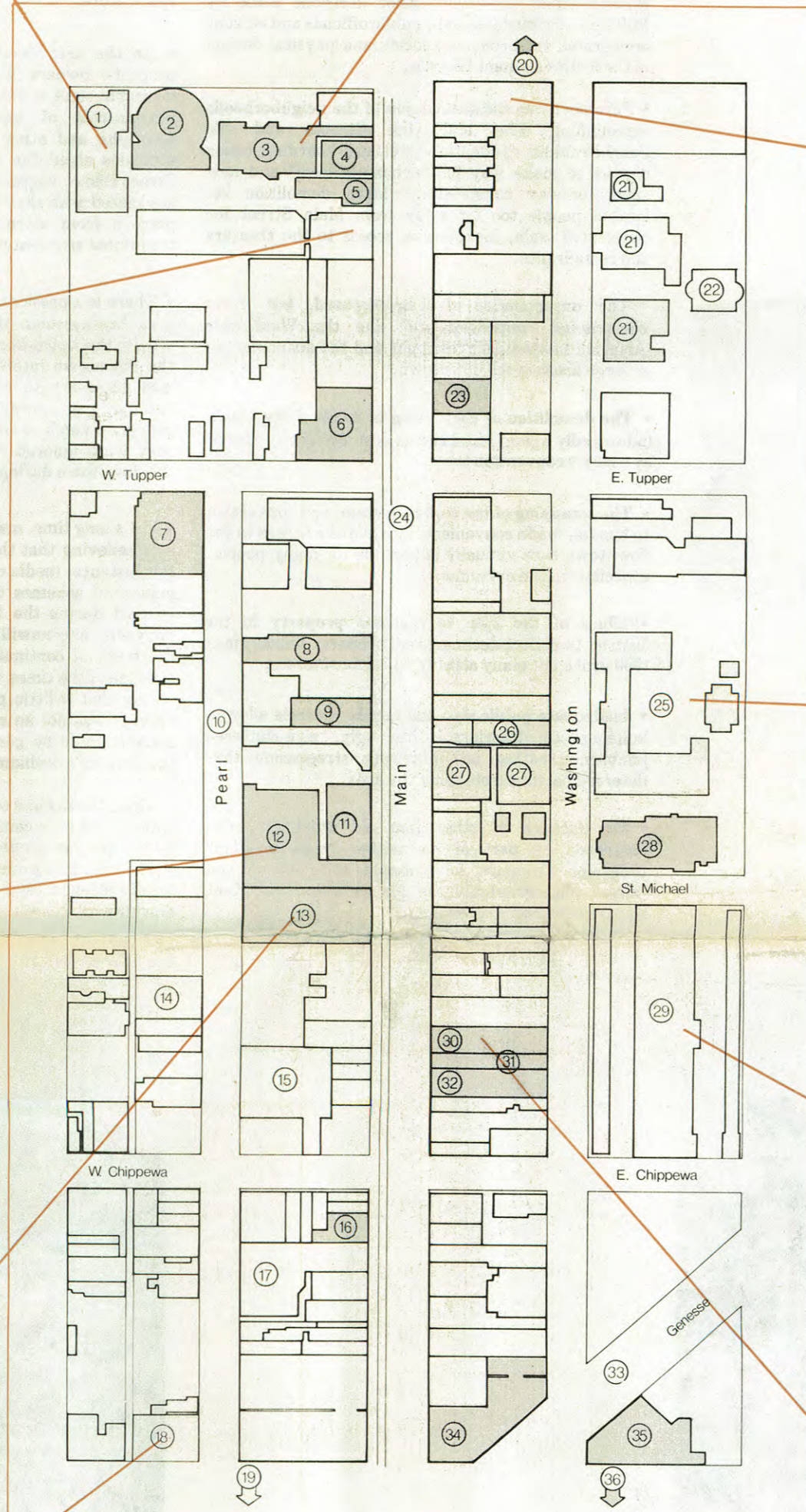
Otto or Kent Building c. 1910

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society



Shea's Gayety Theatre c. 1900

Courtesy Buffalo Savings Bank—Roy W. Nagle collection



Surviving points of historical interest

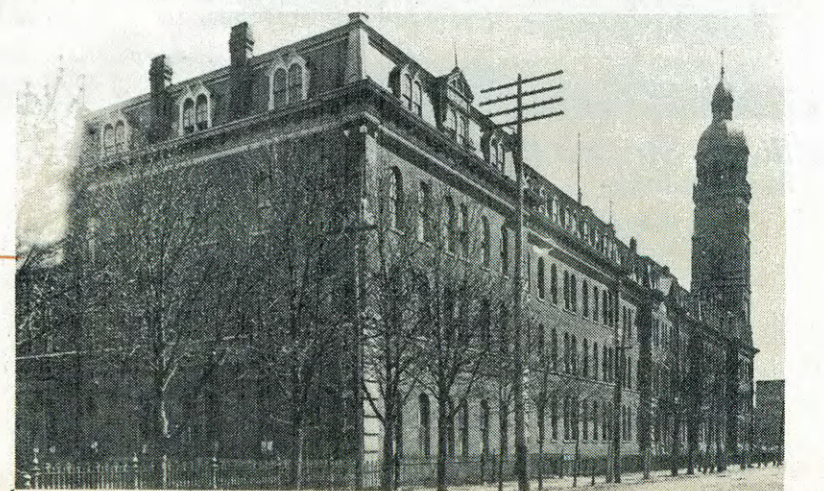
Points of historical interest - demolished

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Grosvenor Library | 14. Orpheus Ballroom | 22. St. Paul's Church |
| 2. Stacks Building | 15. Shea's Great Lakes Theater | 23. Colonial Ballroom |
| 3. German Music Hall (Spielhaus) | 16. The People's Arcade | 24. Main Street Trolley Line |
| Later: Schubert Theater | (Pinball etc.) | 25. Canisius College |
| Now Loew's Teck | 17. Shea's Hippodrome Theater | 26. Winthrop Ballroom |
| 4. Jap-O-Land Ballroom | Later the Center | 667 Main |
| 784 Main | (First movie palace, 1914) | 27. Dr. Pierce's Hospital & |
| 5. A-O-H (Loew's) Ballroom | 18. Shea's Gayety Theater | Patent Medicine Complex |
| 722 Main | (Baroque) | 28. St. Michael's Church |
| 6. Ambassador Ballroom | Pearl and West Huron | 29. Washington (Chippewa) Market |
| 722 Main | (Flag: 1913) | 30. Market Arcade |
| 7. Eagle's Lodge No. 116 | 19. Shea's Majestic Theater | 31. Shea's Beer Garden |
| 8. The Zwickay Ballroom | (Flag: 1913) | 32. Whiteman's Music Shop |
| 688 Main | Genesee and Pearl | 33. Washington Street Trolley Line |
| 9. Wardlizer Music Co | 20. Courier-Express Building | 34. Buffalo Savings Bank |
| 10. Pearl "Stage Door" Street | 21. Convent of the Sacred Heart and | 35. Niagara Mohawk Power Co. |
| 11. Laube's Old Spain Restaurant | Convent school | 36. Shea's Century Theater |
| 12. Shea's Buffalo Theater | | (Vaudeville) |
| (Movie Palace/Vaudeville, 1926) | | |
| 13. Arcadia Ballroom | | |
| Orto Building | | |



Sidway Building c. 1915

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society



Canisius College c. 1890
Site of post office.

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society



Washington Market and
St. Michael's Church c. 1900

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society



Looking south on Main Street
from Chippewa c. 1917

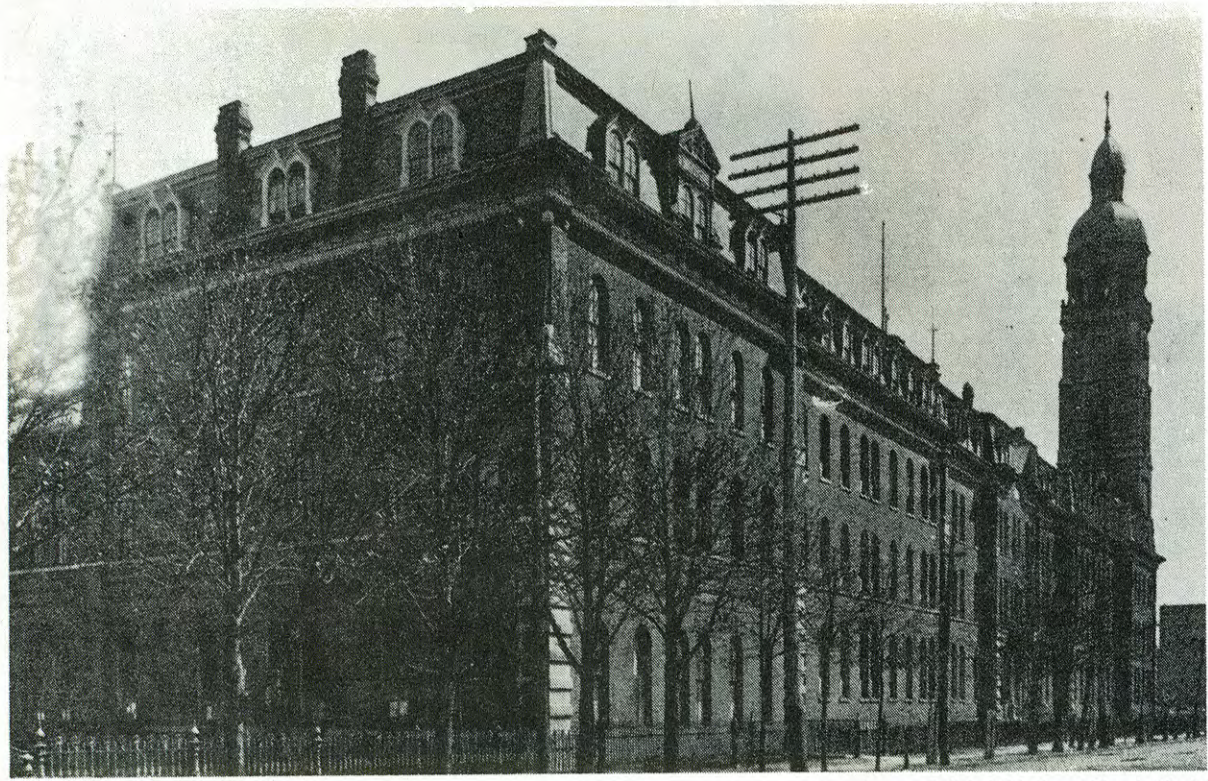
Courtesy Buffalo Savings Bank—Roy W. Nagle Collection



The Market Arcade c. 1900

Courtesy Buffalo Savings Bank—Roy W. Nagle collection

Why it declined



Canisius College - Before

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society

The forces that destroyed Buffalo's Entertainment District also caused the decline of cities throughout the Northeastern United States. Post-war suburbanization drew more than 200,000 people out of Buffalo between 1950 and 1970. At the same time, shifts in regional and national markets and trade patterns reduced Buffalo's significance as a Great Lakes port, and caused a series of business failures, mergers and moves that ended the City's role as a corporate headquarters center. By the end of the 1950's, there was too little money and too few people to support its first-class Entertainment District.

Like theaters in other cities, those in Buffalo were also seriously affected by changing popular taste for entertainment. Television destroyed the mass market on which movie palaces like the Shea's Buffalo depended. Multi-screen theater complexes in well-lighted suburban malls with ample free parking attracted many more patrons than aging theaters in the downtown. As the small maps to the right indicate, fifty years ago nearly all movie theaters were located close to downtown. Today, there are virtually no outlets for first-run movies in the entire city. These forces were beyond the control of any local, public or private action. However, other decisions made by Buffalo's own businessmen, public officials and citizens accelerated the economic, social, and physical decline of the Entertainment District.

- Foremost was the destruction of the neighborhoods surrounding Elm and Oak Streets and the Pearl-Franklin residential hotel and boarding house district to make way for "urban renewal" and new super-highway construction. Mass demolition relocated people too far away from Main Street for convenient, safe, inexpensive access to the theaters and restaurants.

- The uncertainties of long-proposed, but never constructed "improvements" like the West Side Arterial, invited disinvestment and the abandonment of large areas in the downtown.

- The demolition or conversion of 2,000 of the City's (admittedly aging) hotel rooms cost Buffalo its status as a major convention town.

- The scrapping of the trolley system, and conversion to busses, made convenient, inexpensive access to the downtown core virtually impossible for many people, especially in the evenings.

- Failure of the City to reassess property in the District to reflect declining real property values since 1960 drove out many already failing businesses.

- Inadequate public sign and facade controls allowed buildings to deteriorate into ugly, sign-cluttered jumbles, creating an uninviting streetscape that deterred patrons from using the area.

- The facades of other fine old buildings were destroyed as part of insensitive "modernization" programs. Compare, for example, the "before" and "after" photographs of the former Flint and Kent Department Store to the left.

- Overly broad zoning ordinances permitted incompatible uses to destroy the character of District streets. For instance, buildings along Main Street were demolished to provide parking lots or to construct gas stations.

- Uncoordinated planning by local, state and federal government agencies permitted prime development land to be converted to wasteful, inappropriate uses. For instance, compare the photograph of the former Canisius College on Washington Street with what has replaced it, the new Market Station Post Office. The construction of this post office on the block between Washington and Ellicott, rather than between Ellicott and Oak, makes it virtually impossible to use the parcel for desperately needed surface or ramp parking.

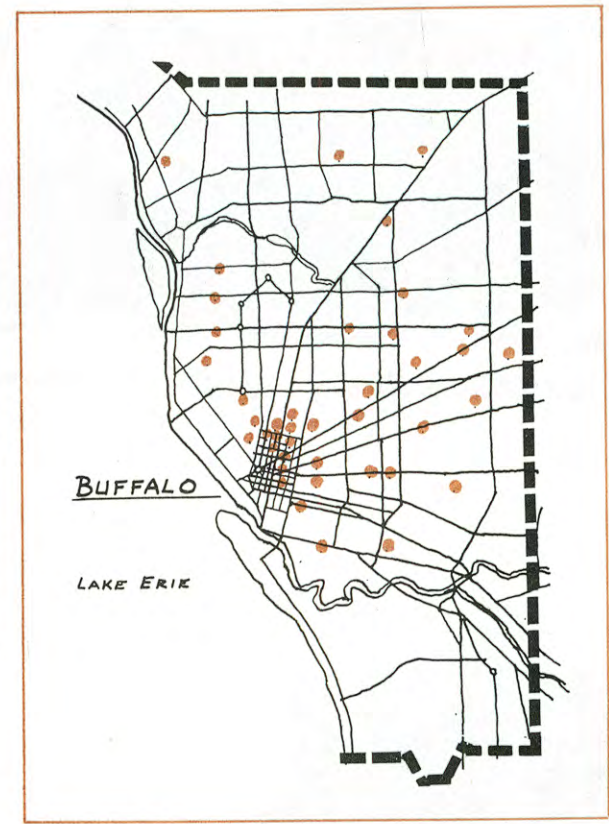
- The purchase of large tracts of land in the District by speculators and non-resident landlords accelerated physical decay and blight. A visual inspection of the area will easily identify which properties are owned by responsible businessmen and which are owned by speculators.

- As the area declined and abandonment spread, property owners were forced to turn to a less desirable class of tenant to maintain occupancy. The introduction of hard-core x-rated movies, pornography and other "adult" uses changed people's attitudes about the character of downtown Buffalo. Street crime, vagrancy and prostitution, which were associated with these new uses, deterred respectable patrons from attending the theater or dining in traditional area restaurants.

- There is a passionately held belief among surviving area businessmen that the Entertainment District was, in the words of one, "written off ten years ago by the downtown interests." A decade ago it probably was necessary to concentrate limited development resources on lower Main Street, but those who remained north of Genesee Street feel resentful that they were ignored when investments were made in the downtown during the 1960's.

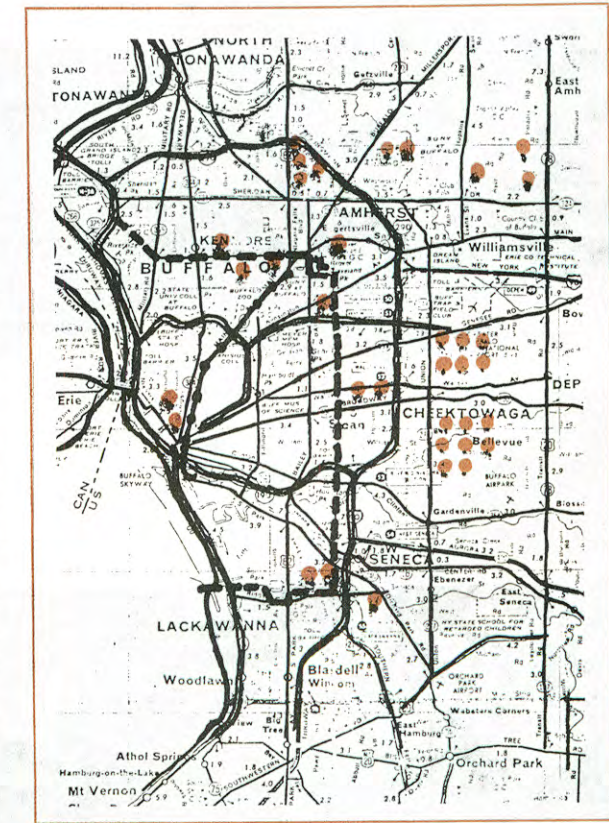
- For a long time, many people were apparently lulled into believing that the area was not really declining. For instance, media coverage of the announcement of plans and schemes to redevelop the Entertainment District during the 1950's and early 1960's reflect a Pollyanna-like unwillingness or inability to recognize the truth of continuing urban decay. The prevalent attitude of the times was that there was really nothing wrong that a little paint and a few trees could not cure. It was not an atmosphere in which much public support could be generated for realistic solutions to the District's problems.

Thus, the decline of Buffalo's Entertainment District was caused by a complex set of inter-related factors. Before one can propose effective alternative solutions to the District's problems, it is instructive to examine briefly recent attempts to arrest the decay of Buffalo's downtown.



Courtesy L.H. Weir, Recreation Survey of Buffalo

Movie Theaters - 1925



Movie Theaters - 1975



Ellicott Station Post Office
Same site today



Flint and Kent building - before "modernization"

Courtesy Buffalo Savings Bank—Roy W. Nagle collection

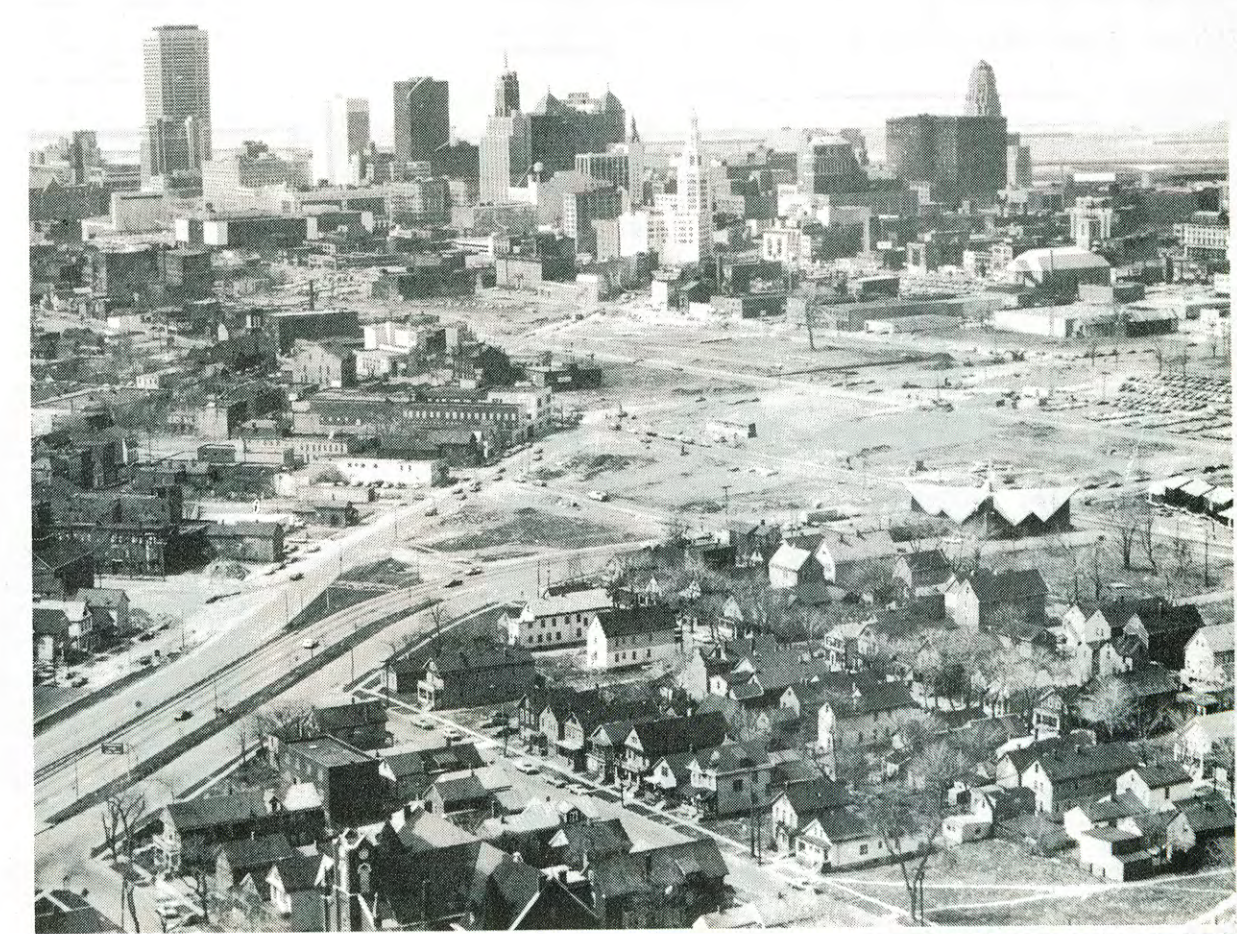


Flint and Kent building - after "modernization"



Neighborhood Housing - 1920s.
At Goodell and Washington Streets.

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society



The Elm-Oak neighborhood
Same area today

Courtesy Buffalo Evening News - Barney Kerr

Existing plans

Existing plans for the Entertainment District

Wallace-McHarg: Discounting a stream of get-rich-quick schemes for the area over the last twenty years, little serious thought was given to the future of the Entertainment District until quite recently. In 1971, A **Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo** was prepared by Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd, a firm of architects and urban planners from Philadelphia. Wallace-McHarg's urban design scheme envisioned the transformation of Buffalo into a regional economic and transportation center by 1990.

Based upon optimistic projections of economic and population growth in Western New York, they recommended a massive construction program in the central business district, adding 13,275,000 square feet of new commercial and office space over a 20-year period. Their recommendations included the construction of an extensive, underground, heavy-rail rapid transit system, the creation of a covered all-weather pedestrian mall along Main between Church and Genesee Streets, additional parking spaces for an expected 20,000 automobiles, the construction of a convention center, and massive super-highway construction to ring the central business district. The Wallace-McHarg plan was a powerful vision which captured the imagination of businessmen and political leaders. The prospects for such a total transformation of the city center have dimmed, but the Wallace-McHarg plan remains the benchmark by which progress in revitalizing downtown Buffalo is judged.

However, the Entertainment District as we have defined it did not fare so well in Wallace-McHarg's concept. Although never adequately developed, their plans for the area included massive new high-rise commercial towers along Chippewa, some housing, and a huge area of highway intersections in which Main Street simply became a dead end. Wallace-McHarg acknowledged the public's identification of the area with theaters and recognized the need to have an entertainment component in the overall plan. But they recommended the demolition of seventy percent of existing structures in the area. With the exception of the Sidway Building at Main and Goodell, every building north of Tupper on the blocks between Washington and Franklin was to be demolished to make way for a West Side Arterial and the rerouting of Main Street away from the pedestrian mall. Both corners of Chippewa and Main, including the Market Arcade Building, were to be leveled to build high-rise commercial structures. It was even suggested (p. 47) that the rest of the 600 block, including Shea's Buffalo Theater, be demolished to build a sports stadium.

The Existing Downtown Concept Plan: Recent development in the downtown remains generally consistent with the Wallace-McHarg plan, but far more modest and much less comprehensive in its execution. There is a clear trend toward developing a service-oriented economy in the downtown core. The construction of the Convention Center, a waterfront hotel, the Naval Park and the Erie Basin Marina are intended to change the region's traditional dependence on heavy industry. Perhaps reflecting uncertainty about the construction of the rapid transit system, however, there has been little growth in the core of the Central Business District.

Understandably, there is also strong pressure to sacrifice the intent of the overall plan to generate any sort of new private construction. This is apparent on the Waterfront Urban Renewal Area behind City Hall, which is attracting fast food shops and other less desirable uses. National economic conditions, state-wide fiscal problems and Buffalo's declining economy have deterred the kind of investment necessary to construct the magnificent urban environment Wallace-McHarg envisioned. One thing that has been missing is a major public works project which could help focus national attention on Buffalo and help attract new private capital. This gap may soon be filled with the construction of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's (NFTA) light rail rapid transit system.

Existing NFTA Plans, about to be submitted for funding to the Federal Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA), call for the first-phase construction of a rapid transit system. It will run along Main Street from the site of the abandoned DL&W Terminal to the State University's Main Street Campus at the city line. Rather than the heavy-rail system assumed by Wallace-McHarg, it is to be "light-rail" -- essentially a sophisticated trolley system. It will be a tandem bus-rail network to increase patronage -- that is, existing bus lines to downtown will be rerouted to connect with the train. The light rail system is to be at grade from the Auditorium until just north of the Chippewa Street intersection. There it will enter a "portal," proceeding underground until it reaches its terminus at the State University campus. Later construction envisions the extension of the system to the new Amherst Campus and to several suburbs. These changes forced a redesign of Wallace-McHarg's concept of the Main Street Mall.

There are six stations planned in the Central Business District. Two are within one block of each other in the Entertainment District -- the Huron Station, between Buffalo Savings Bank and Chippewa Street and the Theater Station, approximately in front of Shea's Buffalo on the 600 Block. The train will

proceed from the Theater Station directly into the "portal." Main Street from Shelton Square north to Huron Street is to become an open pedestrian mall, landscaped, with public spaces and improvements designed to make it an inviting, sheltered shopping area. The extension of the Mall one block north into the 600 Block reflects a new recognition of the special character and development potential of the area as the potential entertainment core of a revitalized downtown.

Current Proposed Traffic Changes: The 1977 proposed downtown traffic plan is a compromise among Wallace-McHarg's grand design, current economic realities, and the redesigned rapid transit system. The proposed West Side Arterial has been officially dropped because of intense community opposition. The Elm-Oak Expressway, originally conceived as a sunken, limited-access superhighway, was redesigned as an at-grade arterial street. Current plans, however, retain the idea of demolishing much of the 700 Block to permit easier access from Main, south to Pearl and from Ellicott, north to Main. Also surviving is the flyover from the Kensington Expressway that will make Genesee Street (rather than Goodell-Edward) the primary access point into downtown.

The AMRA "Joint Development" Report: In recent years, federal legislation has changed to reflect the realization that transit construction may be a major stimulant for depressed urban economies. The Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA) has commissioned a number of "economic joint development" studies designed to pinpoint areas along new transit routes which have the greatest economic potential. In Buffalo, a consortium of public agencies and private organizations, especially the Greater Buffalo Development Foundation (GBDF), asked the Administration and Management Research Association (AMRA) of New York to study the potential economic impact of the NFTA's light rail system, and to suggest ways of maximizing private investment around transit stations. The AMRA "Transit Station Area Joint Development" report (released in January 1978) singled out the zone around the Theater Station as having the greatest potential economic growth in the short-term. AMRA was impressed with the architectural character of the existing structures on Main Street and by its core of legitimate theaters already there. It urged affirmative public action to attract investors to the Entertainment District. The actions it suggested included creating a non-profit entity to manage development, public acquisition of the large number of tax-delinquent properties in the area, publicly-financed capital improvements (especially constructing the transit mall, expanding theater renovation programs and a facade renovation program for Main Street), and the development of a unifying design theme for the area.

Our Proposal in Context: Our Project Report incorporates a great deal from these earlier studies which we felt was still timely. We have tried to adapt their suggestions to what we perceive to be current social, economic, physical and political realities. The Wallace-McHarg plan, although obsolete in many

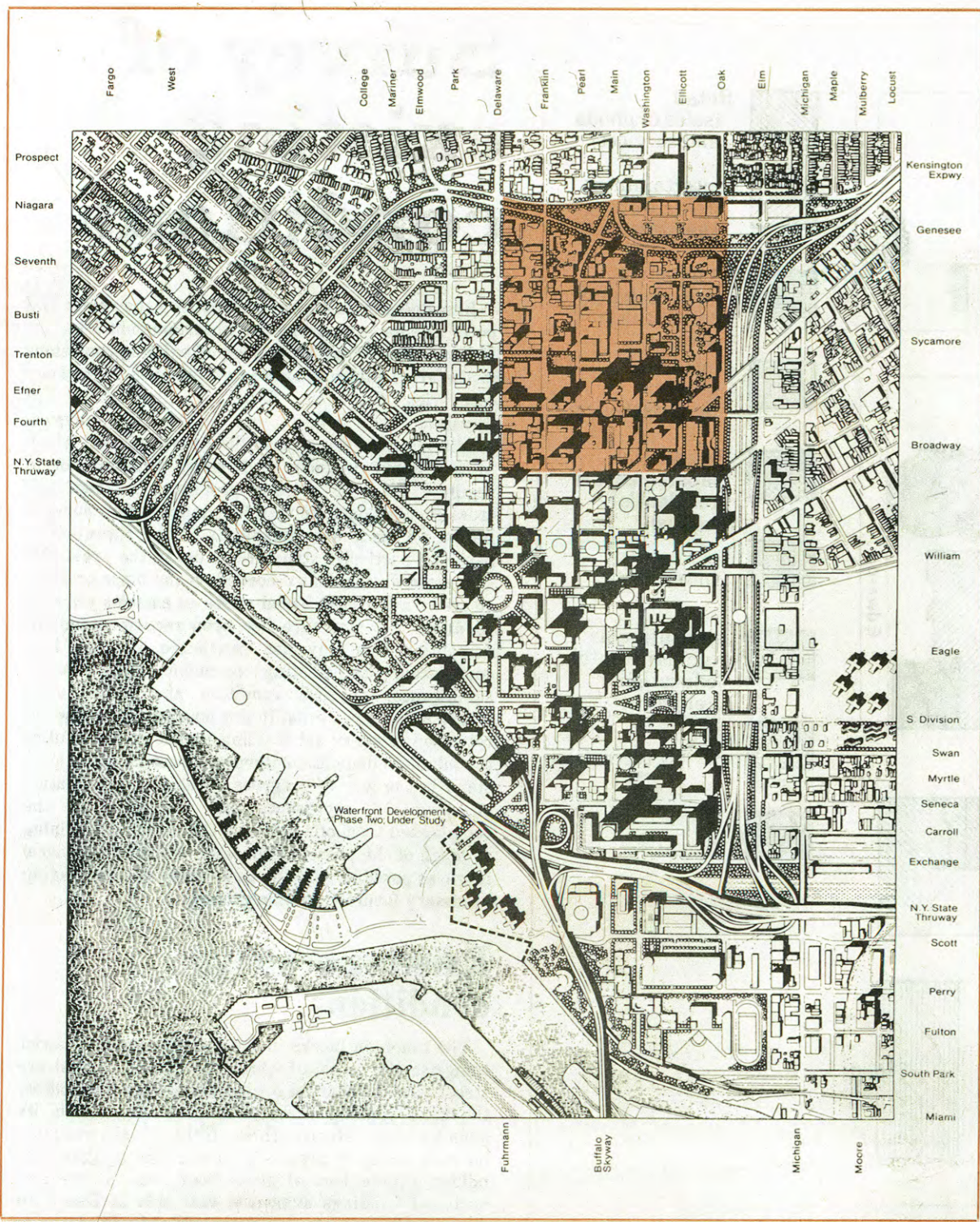
details, remains in spirit the kind of positive, long-term vision Buffalo desperately needs. However, we disagree with the values implicit in their suggestion that the existing Entertainment District be nearly totally demolished. We also think that Wallace-McHarg's trust in the ability of unguided market forces to rebuild the area has proved to be unrealistic. These were the assumptions of federally-funded urban renewal programs, few of which have had much positive economic benefit for the City of Buffalo or any other declining Northeastern metropolis. Recent changes in federal and state urban policies are evidence that other reputable observers have come to the same conclusions.

More recently, AMRA and others have taken a hard look at the potential for development in Buffalo's center city. Even considering less optimistic projections of regional growth, the potential for economic development in the downtown remains high. In our opinion, the fact that the Wallace-McHarg plan was too optimistic about future economic growth is not pertinent. Projections are computed by extending current trends indefinitely into the future. If decisions are to be made solely on such information, we may as well all pack up and leave Buffalo.

What is significant about Wallace-McHarg is not that their economic guesses were incorrect, but that they were able to develop a forceful, hopeful conception of what Buffalo could look like in the twenty-first century. For a time, this image captured the public's imagination, and acted as a focus around which economic, social and political interests could mobilize.

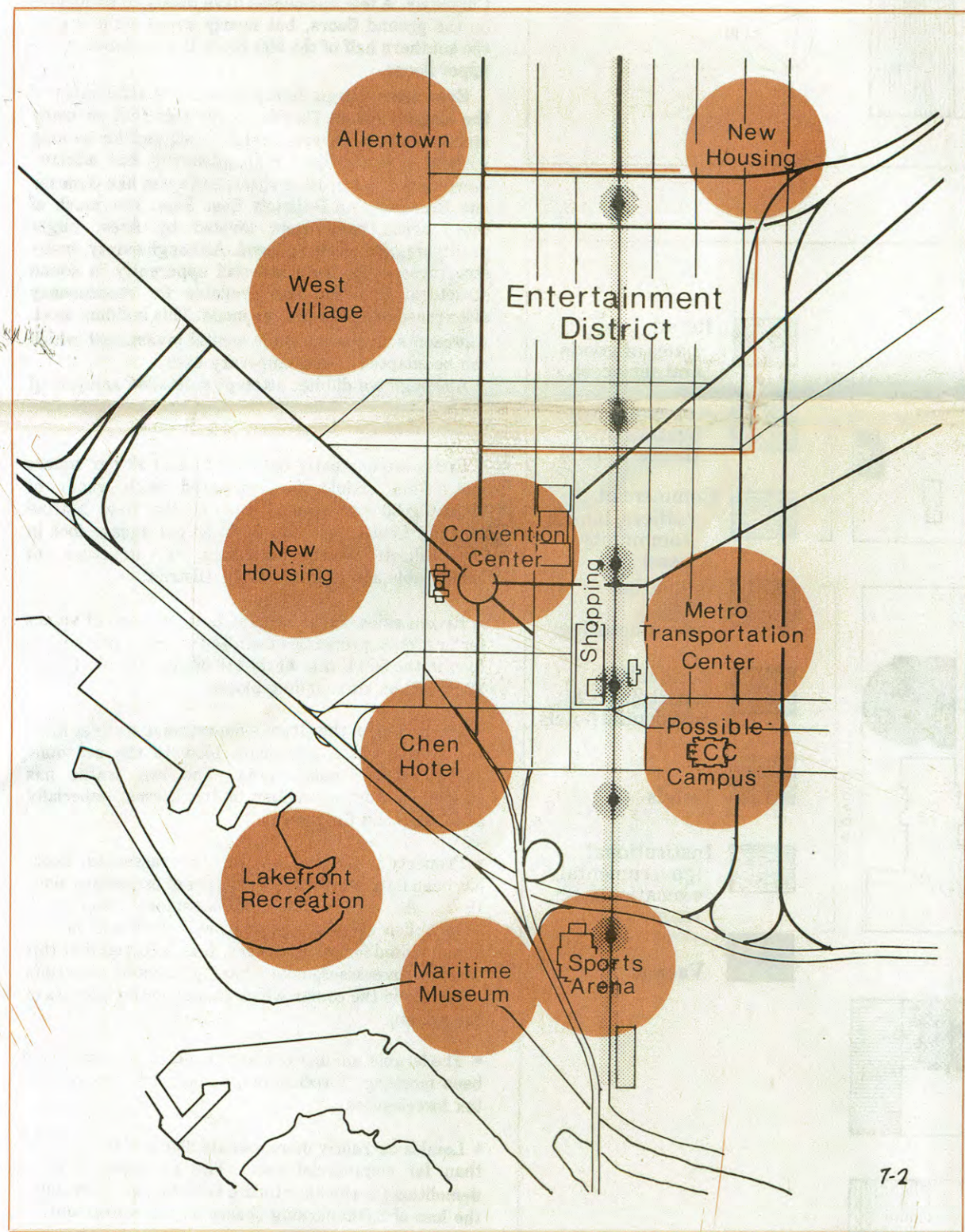
What has changed most since Wallace-McHarg is not the area's economic forecasts, but the role of state and federal governments in directly subsidizing private economic development and urban reinvestment. Since 1974, federal urban aid programs and formulae have been totally reformed. Local governments, through their elected officials, are now expected to invest a significant portion of federal aid in economic development. Although obviously insufficient to rebuild the City, millions of dollars are now available as seed money through HUD's Community Development Block Grants and Urban Development Action Grants, President Carter's proposed "Urban Development Bank," the Economic Development Administration, UMTA's "economic joint development" program, and the Labor Department's CETA program. There is every reason to believe that funding under these programs and others will be significantly increased in the near future.

This federal assistance must be used as a magnet to attract private capital investment. The traditional notion that local governments should limit their involvement in the development process to providing public works has proved insufficient to halt Buffalo's decline. In our opinion, both a forceful urban design concept and the development of a coherent economic development strategy are prerequisites for the revitalization of the Entertainment District. Our mandate is to determine if it is possible to develop a concept for the area which will justify the investment of limited public funds. Before we can make any suggestions to the City of Buffalo, it is necessary to examine existing conditions in the District in far greater detail than has ever been attempted before. The results of these surveys are presented in the next section, and form the basis for our proposals for revitalizing the area.

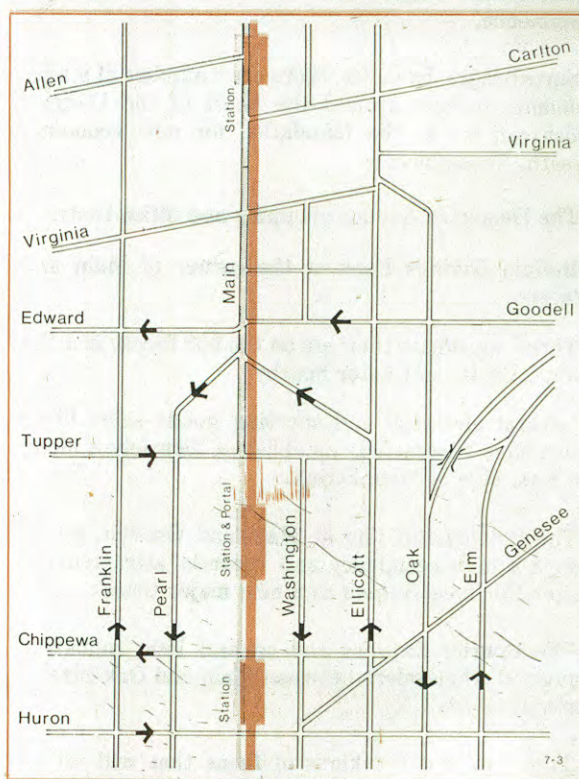


"The Regional Center" Plan

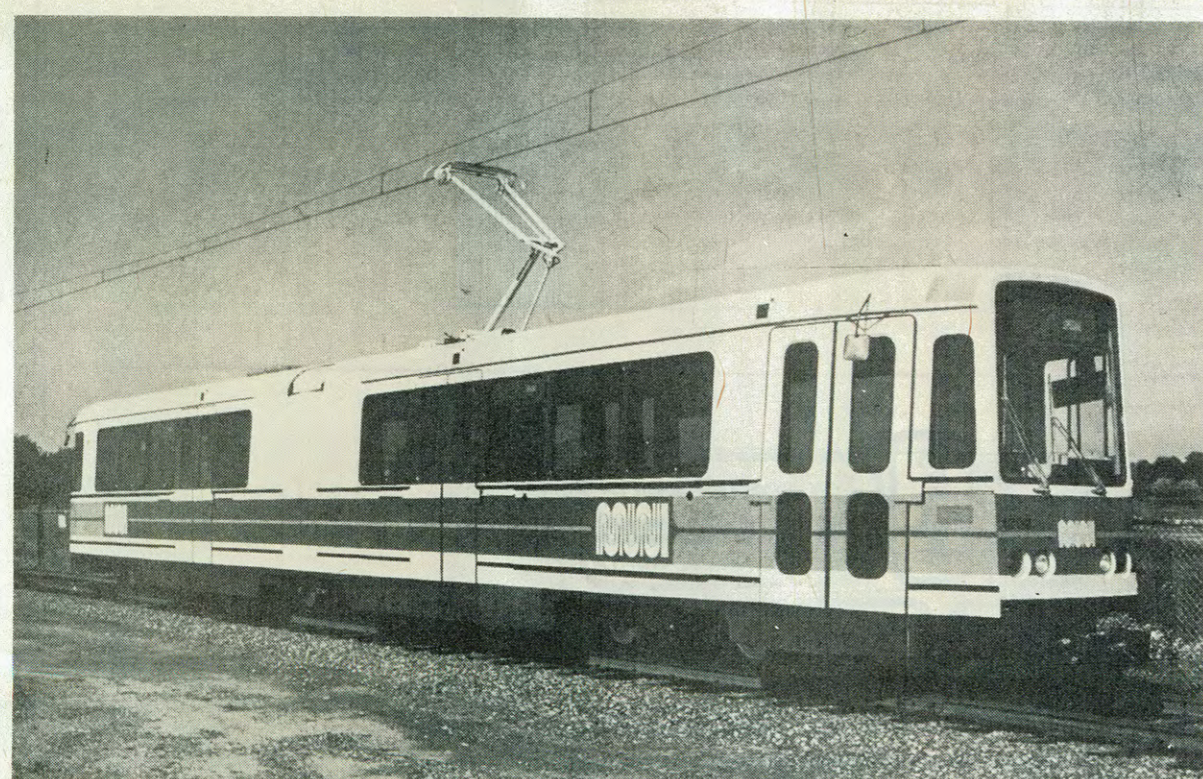
Courtesy Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd Associates; Greater Buffalo Development Foundation



Existing downtown concept plan

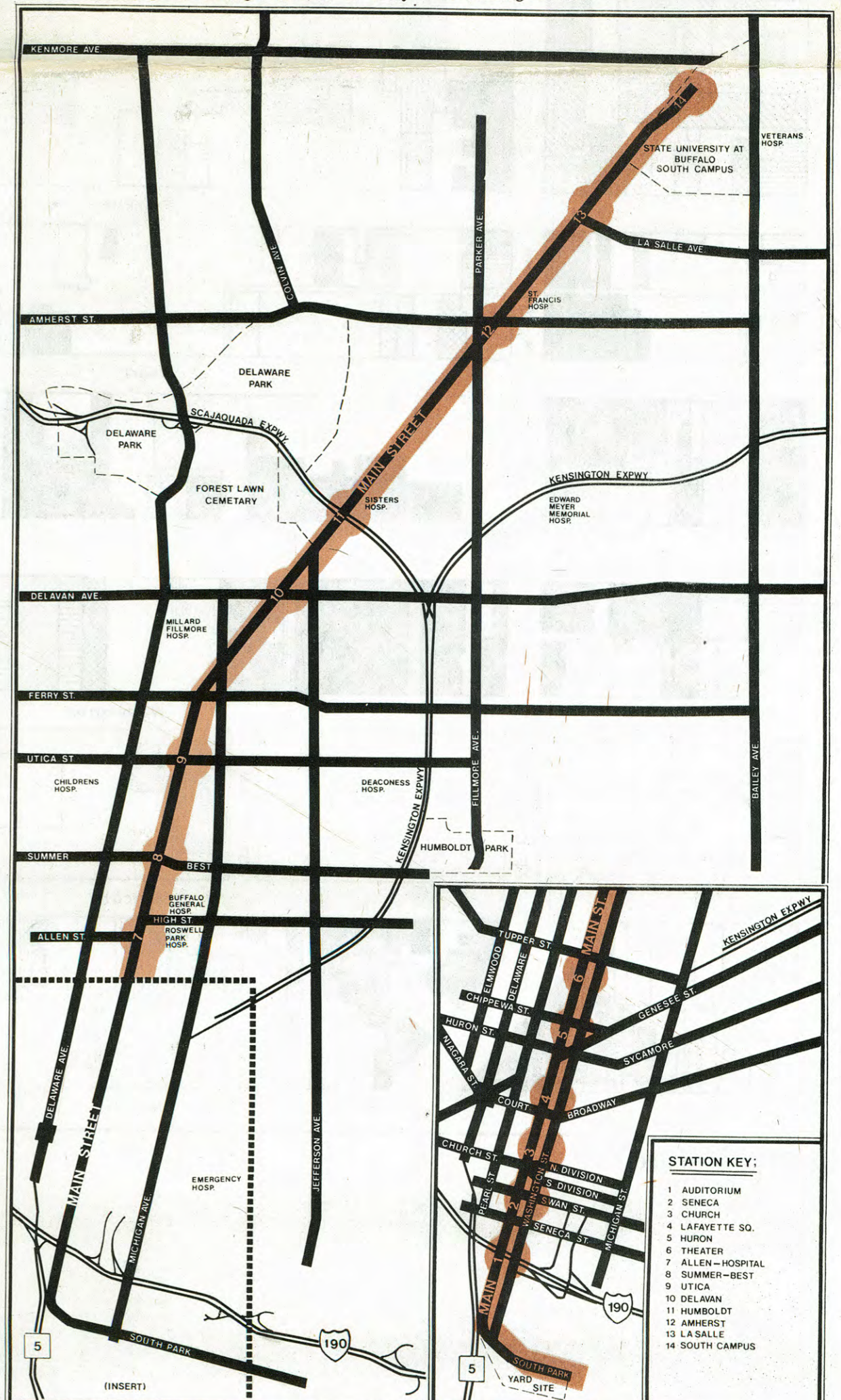


Proposed traffic plan 1977



Proposed light rail vehicle

Courtesy Boeing-Vertol Company



Proposed transit system map

Courtesy Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

Survey of existing conditions

Introduction: In order to establish constraints and potentials for revitalizing the Entertainment District, we conducted a thorough survey of existing conditions in the area. Information was gathered in four broad categories: Economic, Social, Transportation and Physical. This reflects our belief that physical conditions alone are an insufficient criterion on which to base public decisions to demolish structures or to regulate uses of private property. Instead, we cross-checked data from all four independent surveys before we made any judgments on the appropriateness of a particular structure or use in the area. The suggested dispositions recorded on the maps on Page 16 are therefore not based solely on existing physical condition. No structure has been recommended for demolition, nor any use prohibited without first considering its existing economic value, social significance, physical condition and effect upon transportation patterns. In our opinion, the senseless retention of every old building is just as wasteful as the mindless demolition of every structure thought to stand in the way of progress. Each recommendation on Page 16 represents our judgment of the complicated tradeoffs between the merit of retaining as much of the present economic, social and physical fabric as possible, and the desirability of encouraging necessary future economic growth.

Existing economic conditions

The nineteen blocks in the Entertainment District comprise 106 acres, of which one fifth (21 acres) are streets. As the chart at the bottom of Page 9 indicates, the most striking characteristic of the area is its abandonment. Nearly three fifths of all available building space is presently vacant—more than two million square feet of gross floor area. If we had excluded buildings along the east side of Delaware Avenue, the vacancy statistic would undoubtedly have increased another ten percent. The greatest rates of vacancy occur along Main Street, especially north of Chippewa. A few businesses have managed to survive on the ground floors, but nearly every structure on the southern half of the 600 Block is abandoned on its upper floors.

Even more extraordinary than the abandonment of the Entertainment District is the fact that so many structures have survived relatively intact for so long without tenants. Similar abandonment has affected downtown areas in other cities, and areas like Genesee and Broadway on Buffalo's East Side. But much of these areas have been leveled by fires, blight profiteers, and urban renewal. Although empty, many structures along Main are still apparently in sound structural condition and available for reoccupancy after reasonable repairs are made. This building stock represents an irreplaceable capital investment which can be adapted to contemporary uses.

Although we did not attempt a detailed analysis of the economic conditions in the area, the available data further illustrate the District's problems.

- Rents are currently between \$1 and \$3 per square foot. This should be compared with rents of \$9.25-\$10.00 per square foot in the new Marine Midland Center, or of \$4.00-\$5.50 per square foot in the Ellicott Square Building, a structure of comparable age to many in the District.

- Recent sales transactions indicate a range of values for improved properties from \$4.00-\$16.00 per square foot on the 500 Block; \$1.50-\$16 on the 600 Block; and \$2.50-\$10 on surrounding blocks.

- The closing of the Grant's department store at Main and Huron was a significant blow to the economic vitality of the entire area. The lost traffic has reportedly hurt a number of businesses, especially near Main and Chippewa.

- Property in the area is greatly overassessed. There has been no systematic reevaluation of properties since 1960. A county-wide reassessment that will re-establish rates at fair market values will not be implemented for several years. It is reported that this chronic overassessment has generated lawsuits presently in the courts which challenge the fairness of the system.

- The largest number of recent land transactions have been mortgage foreclosures, bankruptcy actions and tax foreclosures.

- Land is currently more valuable for surface parking than for commercial uses. The prospect of mass demolitions in the near future is high, especially since the loss of 2,000 parking spaces on the waterfront.

- Adult uses, which proliferated in the area throughout the 1960's and early 1970's are still present, but greatly reduced in number and character. Prostitution is common along Chippewa Street, but concerted law enforcement has reduced its day-time prominence.

Surprisingly, however, there are a number of stable economic anchors around the heart of the District which can act as the foundation for new economic growth. These include:

- The Delaware Avenue shopping and office District.
- Buffalo Savings Bank at the corner of Main and Genesee.
- Three legitimate theaters on the 600 Block, and the Buffalo Christian Center nearby.

- Several electrical and sporting goods sales firms which have successfully established themselves along the East side of Main Street.

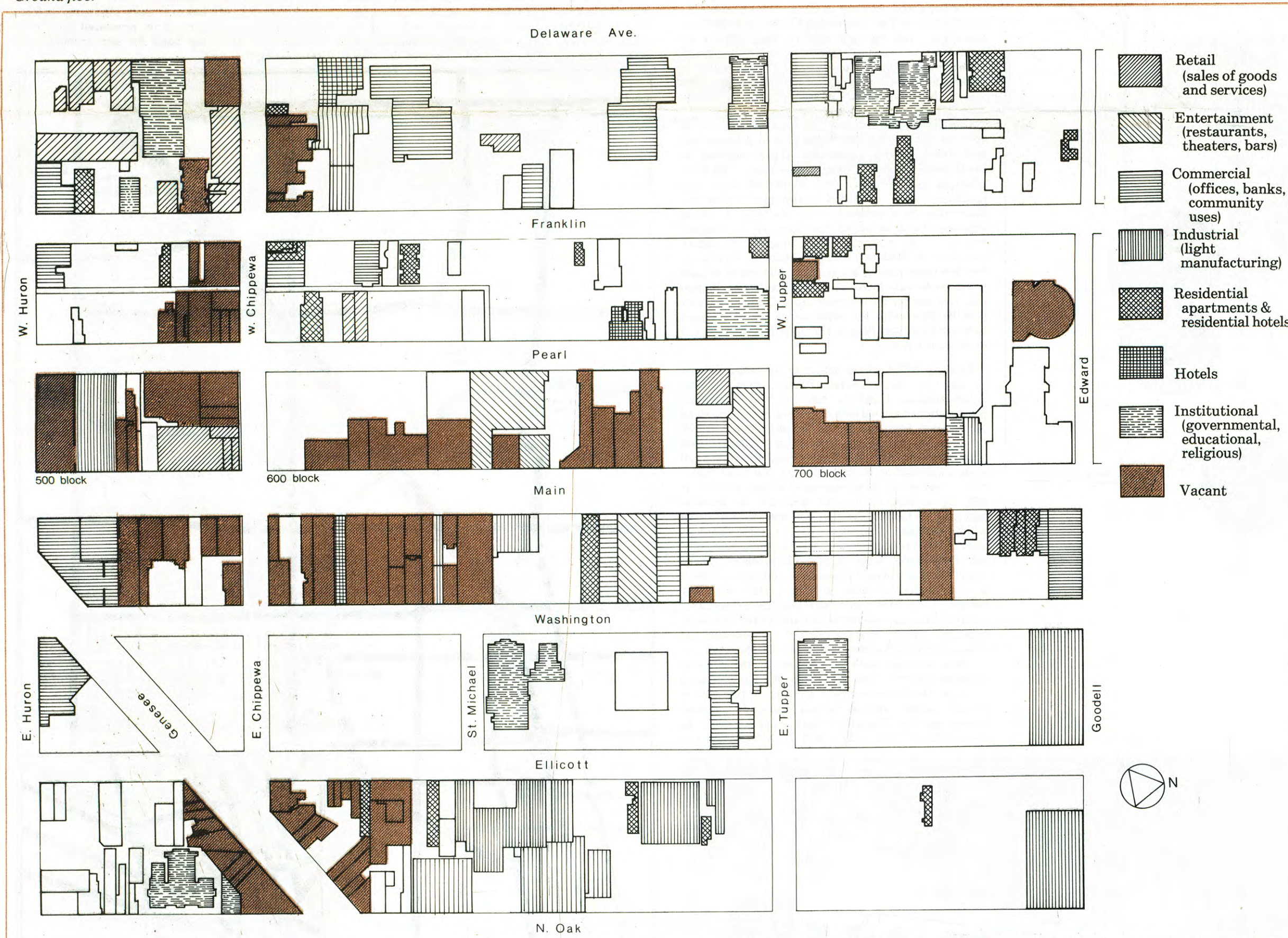
- The Sidway Building at Main and Goodell, which enjoys a high occupancy and recently attracted the Better Business Bureau as a new major tenant.

- The Courier-Express and several light industrial firms and wholesalers between Main and Oak Street, north of Goodell.

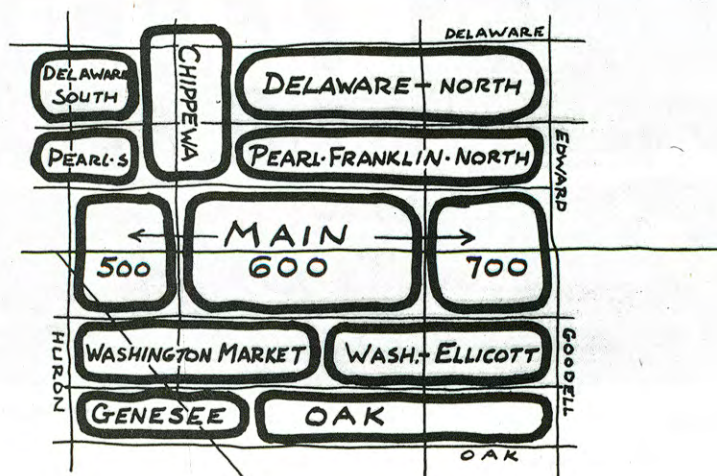
These are not the kinds of firms that will act as major economic generators to revitalize the Entertainment District, but they are established economic presences which will help attract new generators and support them once they locate in the District.



Existing land use
Ground floor

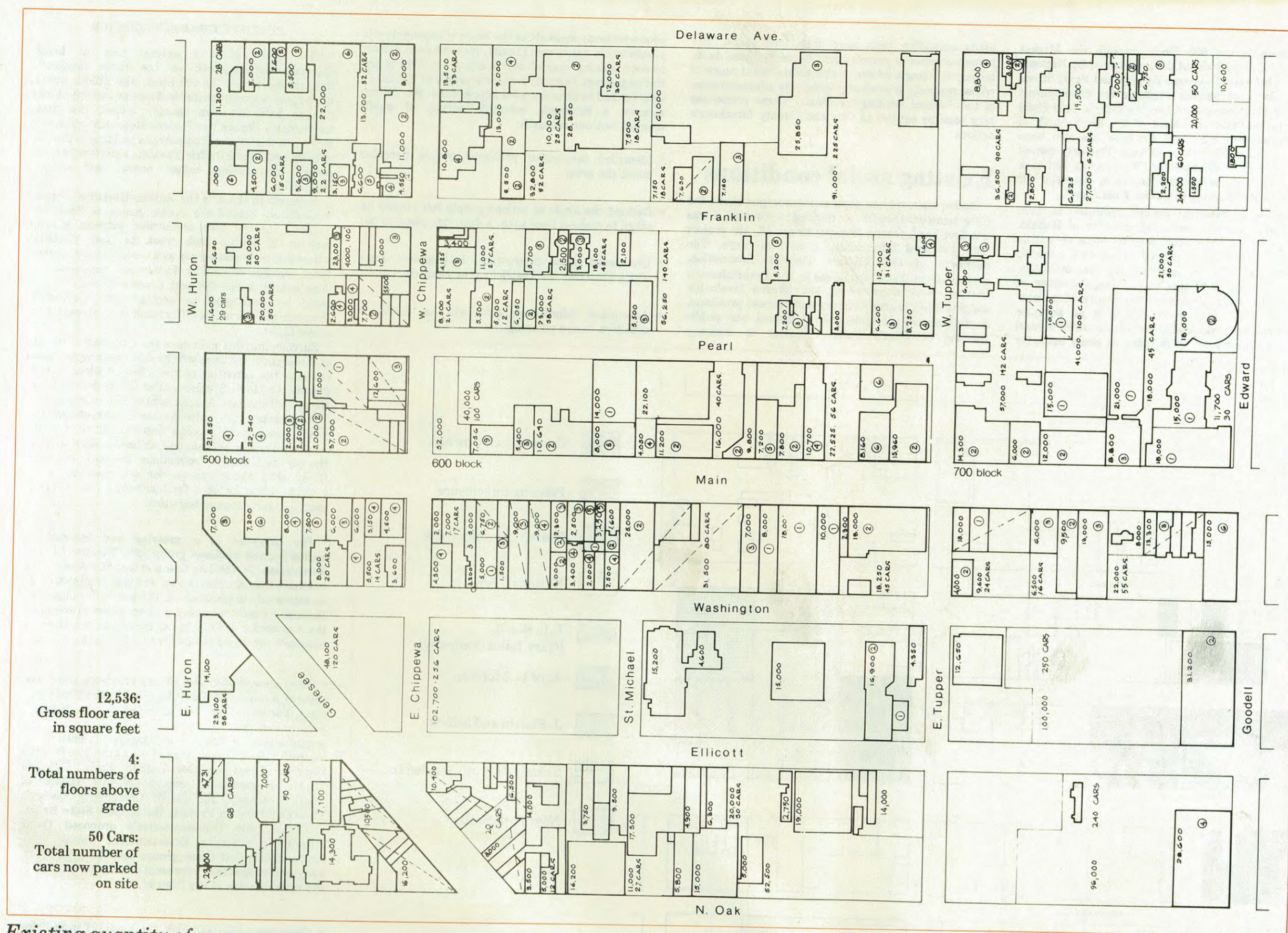


Existing land use
Upper floors

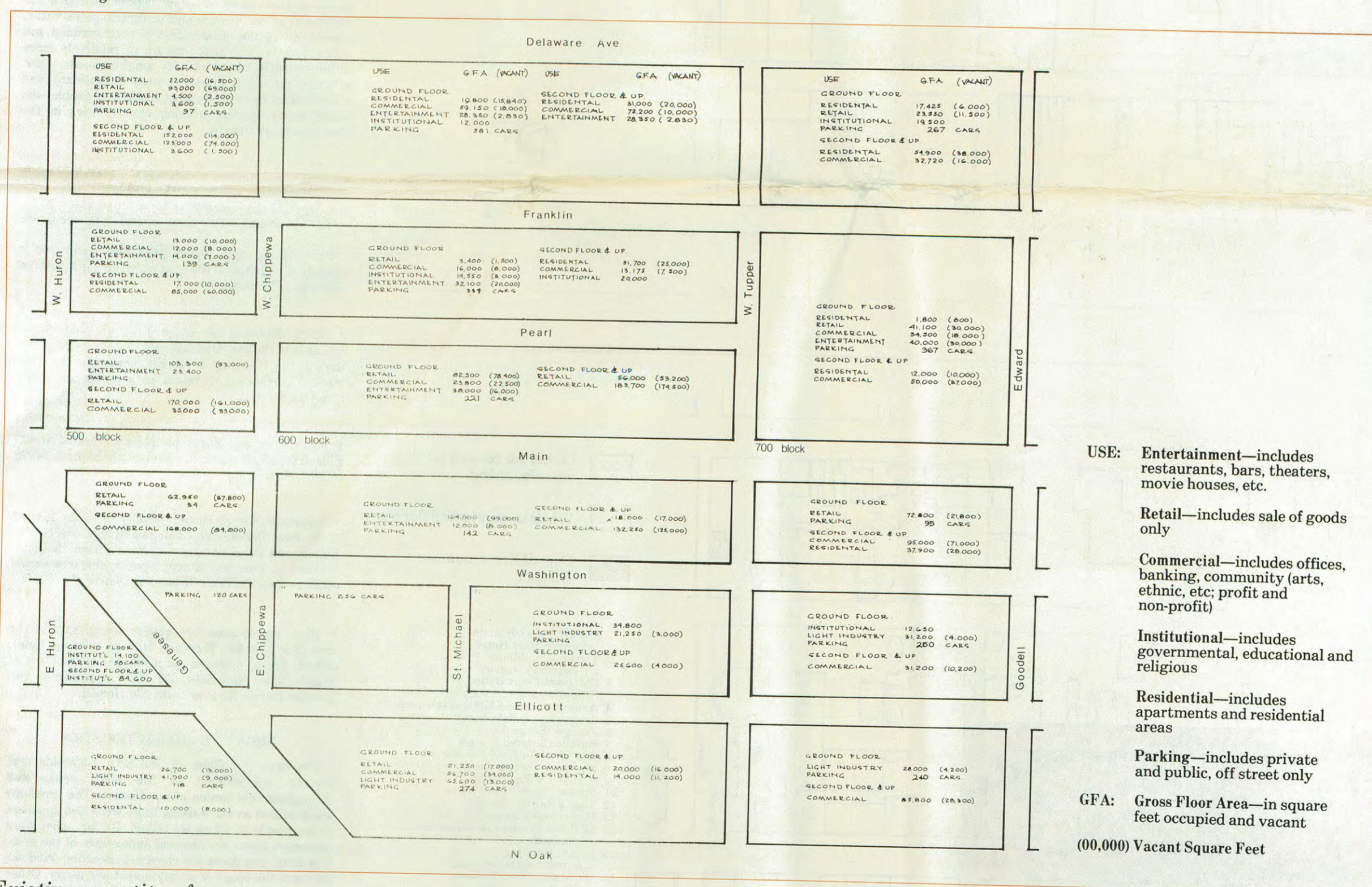


Geographic 'zones'

Existing Land Use: Statistical Information



Existing quantity of space Per building



Existing quantity of space Per block

Table I: Existing economic uses.

Building Use † Categories	Estimated Total Square Feet	Building Space (GFA*)			
		Occupied		Vacant	
		sf	% of Total	sf	% of Total
Commercial @	1,450,000	576,000	39%	874,000	60%
Retail	951,000	238,000	25%	713,000	74%
Residential	422,000	114,000	27%	308,000	72%
Entertainment	192,000	96,000	50%	96,000	50%
Light Industrial	188,000	169,000	89%	19,000	10%
Institutional	181,000	181,000	100%	-0-	0%
Total	3,384,000	1,374,000	40%	2,010,000	59%

*GFA: Explained in Key to map on this page. † Use: Defined in Key to map on this page.
 @ Includes space for non-profit arts and cultural organizations.

Existing property ownership

The map on this page combines two sets of data: current title holders of large or strategically placed parcels; and parcels pending imminent foreclosure by the City of Buffalo or by Erie County for non-payment of property taxes.

Property Ownership: There are several large land assemblages within the District which offer immediate opportunity for different sorts of new development. The largest and most strategically placed is the vacant tract owned by Buffalo Savings Bank located between Washington and Ellicott Streets. Although presently used as employee parking, the area is located at the first entrance to downtown from the new Kensington Expressway, is close to the Convention Center, and

has access to the 600 Block through the Market Arcade Building. Some of the land owned by National Gypsum between Delaware Avenue and Pearl Street should also soon become available for development with the abandonment of the Company's Gold Bond Products headquarters. Most of the block north of Tupper between Main and Franklin has also been assembled into a few large parcels. Property owned by New York State between Washington and Oak Streets also has attractive long-term potential for development of parking to service Main Street.

Foreclosures Pending: Parcels indicated in dark brown are presently owned by the City of Buffalo. Contrary to popular opinion, the City owns very little in the Project Area -- a few small vacant lots, a school, Shea's Buffalo Theater, and two adjacent buildings. What is more interesting is the large number of parcels currently pending foreclosure for non-payment of property taxes. There is no accurate accounting, but undoubtedly the City is owed several hundred thousand dollars in taxes, in many cases for

debts extending back more than four years. The largest number of parcels encumbered by these debts belong to a single owner, a real estate agent much of whose property is presently under the administration of the Federal Bankruptcy Court. These properties may soon be subject to City and County foreclosure actions.

Existing social conditions

Rather than rely on popular stereotypes about the Entertainment District, we decided to see what it was like first-hand. Over a four-month period, our project staff gathered information in several ways. The members of the Theater District Association, most of whom have businesses in the Entertainment District, were interviewed, and offered invaluable insights into the area's history and current problems. A mail survey of those who attended our public meeting at Shea's Buffalo Theater in January

produced many ideas about the kinds of improvements people would like to see. Finally, we conducted a door-to-door walking tour of nearly every business in the Entertainment District, to inform people of the City's interest and to form our own impressions. We did not attempt a thorough, scientific survey of public opinion, but our research:

- Identified the major problems people perceive about the area;
- Defined the kinds of actions people felt should be taken to make it once again a desirable place to be;
- Uncovered some interesting, little-known facts which illustrate the District's true character; and
- Assembled information that will be useful in sensitive future planning.

POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS

• The existence of a natural core of family entertainment centered on the three legitimate theaters located on the 600 Block: the Studio Arena, the largest regional theater in America and one of only two to have its own theater school; the State University's Center for Theater Research which will move into the former Studio Arena building in the Fall of 1978; and Shea's Buffalo Theater, a performing arts center for touring ballet, opera, and musical companies.

Adjacent to this is the Buffalo Christian Center, immediately behind the Studio Arena at Pearl and Tupper. Its 800 seat auditorium attracts a large number of people each week to hear Christian entertainers. It also serves as a central meeting place for a number of smaller Protestant congregations. Also nearby is the 600-seat Cinema Theater, which could be renovated to accommodate legitimate, first-run and art movies (it presently is an outlet for erotic films).

Surrounding this tight core are a number of satellite entertainment facilities which could easily support and enhance the activities of the Theater Block. These include the Media Studies Center (in the former Mars Hotel) on Delaware Avenue south of Mohawk; Loew's Teck Theater, the only theater in the center city which occasionally screens first-run films; and the Century Theater at Main and Mohawk, often used by Harvey and Corky Productions for rock concerts. Other area public spaces—for instance, St. Louis Church—could be used for lunch-time and weekend special entertainment activities.

• The presence of a growing and increasingly well-organized business group, the Theater District Association. In the last five months, the Association has more than doubled in size, and is beginning to take an active role in planning for the area's development. Because its members have a direct stake in the area, the Association will become an important constituency to assure continued public investment in the District.

• The renewed optimism of city residents about the chances for successful development in the Entertainment District. This is expressed in the growing number of non-profit arts, cultural and ethnic organizations which have already indicated an interest in moving part or all of their activities into the District. These include: Buffalo State College's Theater Department, Daeman College's Theater of Youth Company, the Polish Community Center's Theater Education Project, the Empire State Ballet, and Sun Ship Communication's proposed Oscar Michaux Community Entertainment Center. Our impression is that these groups and the institutions and communities they represent wish to participate in the revitalization of the District.

• Changing attitudes about the value of preserving the past, of remembering our ethnic heritage, and of living in the center of cities. These attitudes are expressed in the historic and landmark preservation movement, in the organization of neighborhood and ethnic groups, and in the return of relatively more affluent people to center city neighborhoods. Such attitudes are widely shared by many Buffalonians, and were evident to us in the large number of people who asked about existing housing opportunities in the Entertainment District.

• Greater realism and a willingness to face the truth about the extent of the City's economic decline may now serve as the foundations for a broad-based effort to solve problems rather than conceal or ignore them.

Our walking tour of the area also uncovered a number of activities in the area which give it a positive character. For instance:

• Ellicott Street is the center of the wholesale florist business in Buffalo. Undoubtedly a holdover from the days of the Washington Market, these are the ideal kind of businesses to retain as a buffer along the Elm-Oak arterial.

• Tom's Fruit and Vegetable Market, located at 433 Ellicott for a half-century, still does a brisk business in retail fruit baskets.

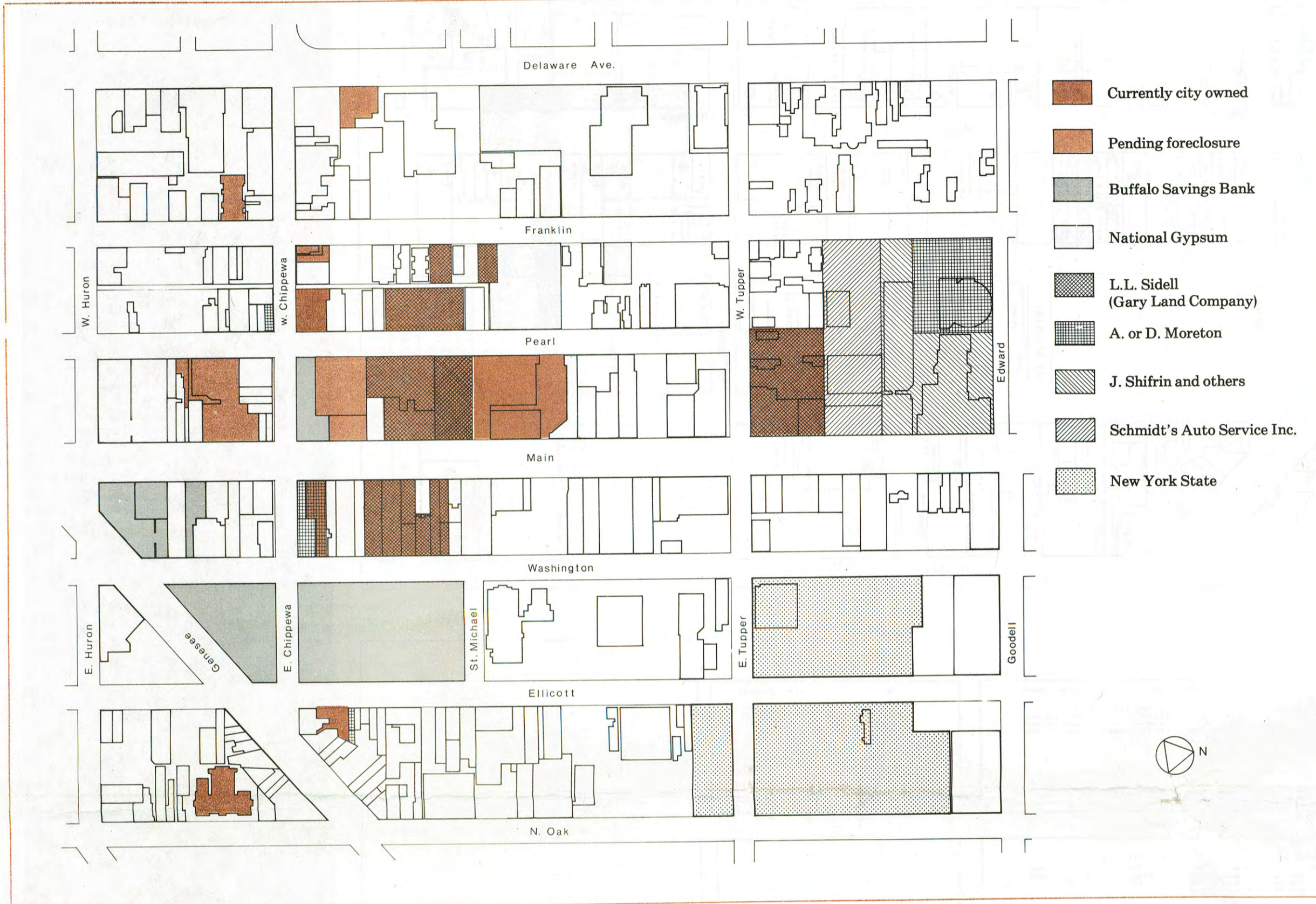
• A number of small custom jewelry firms are located in the Root Building on Chippewa Street, the Saturn Building on Pearl and the 700 Main Street Building. Perhaps an area that is now a public embarrassment could become Buffalo's "Diamond District."

• There are at least two quality restaurants in the area (Rue Franklin West and Murphy's Omega Cafe), several decent places to eat lunch (try the baklava at Tony's Texas Red Hots, 621 Main), and one or two favorite haunts (Grover's Old Ale House).

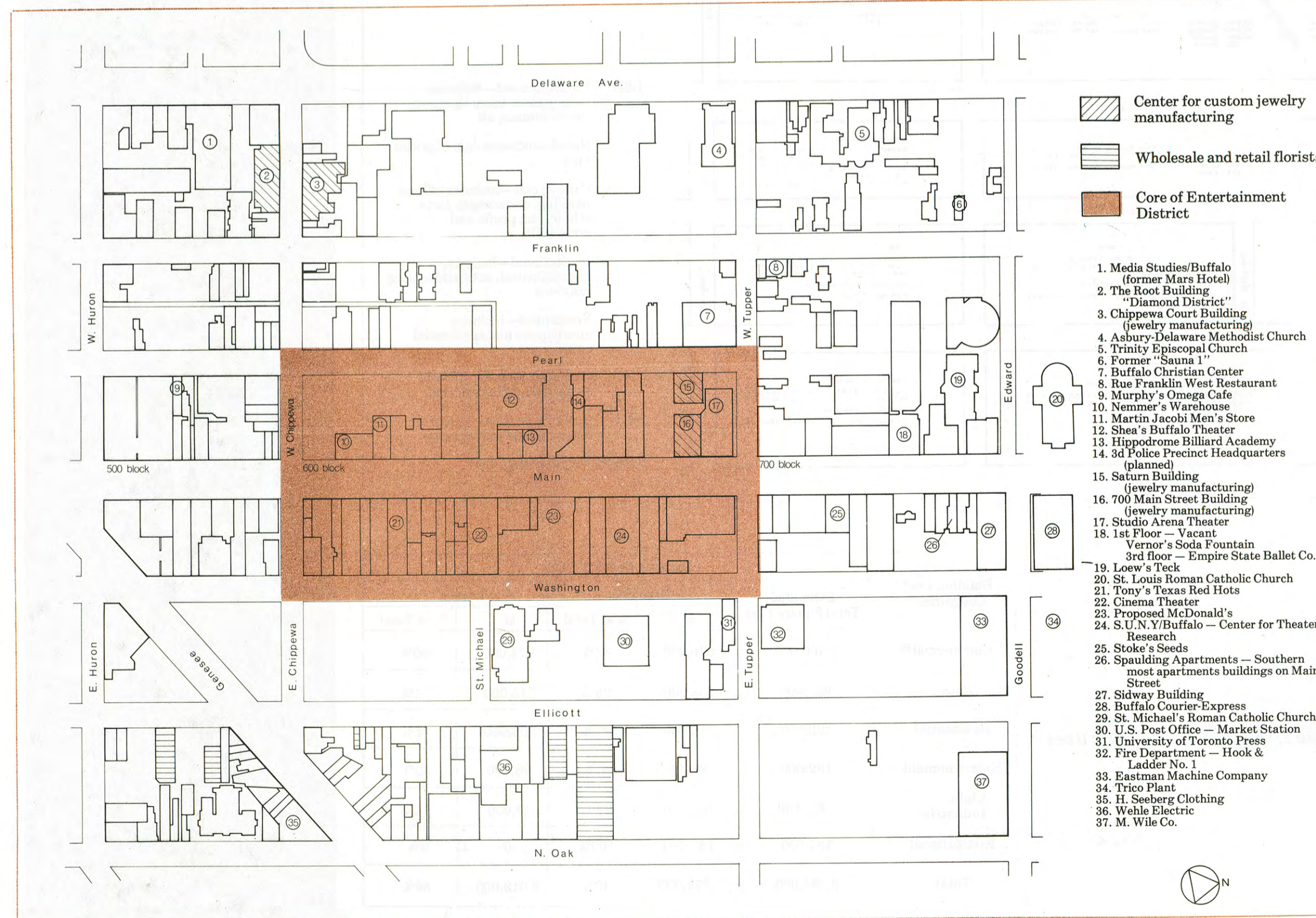
NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The main problems of Buffalo's Entertainment District are evident in the maps reproduced throughout this section of our Report. The problems we identified on our walking tours were also apparent to the people to whom we talked. By far, most were concerned about the physical appearance of the area. It is dirty, run-down and cheerless. Boarded windows reinforce the image of abandonment and decay. Other people were especially upset with the problem of crime, especially alleged muggings and prostitution along Chippewa Street. The image of the District as being a high-crime area is constantly reinforced by zealous media coverage of the prostitution problem. However, businessmen and theater operators along Main Street emphasized that they had never suffered from a serious crime problem.

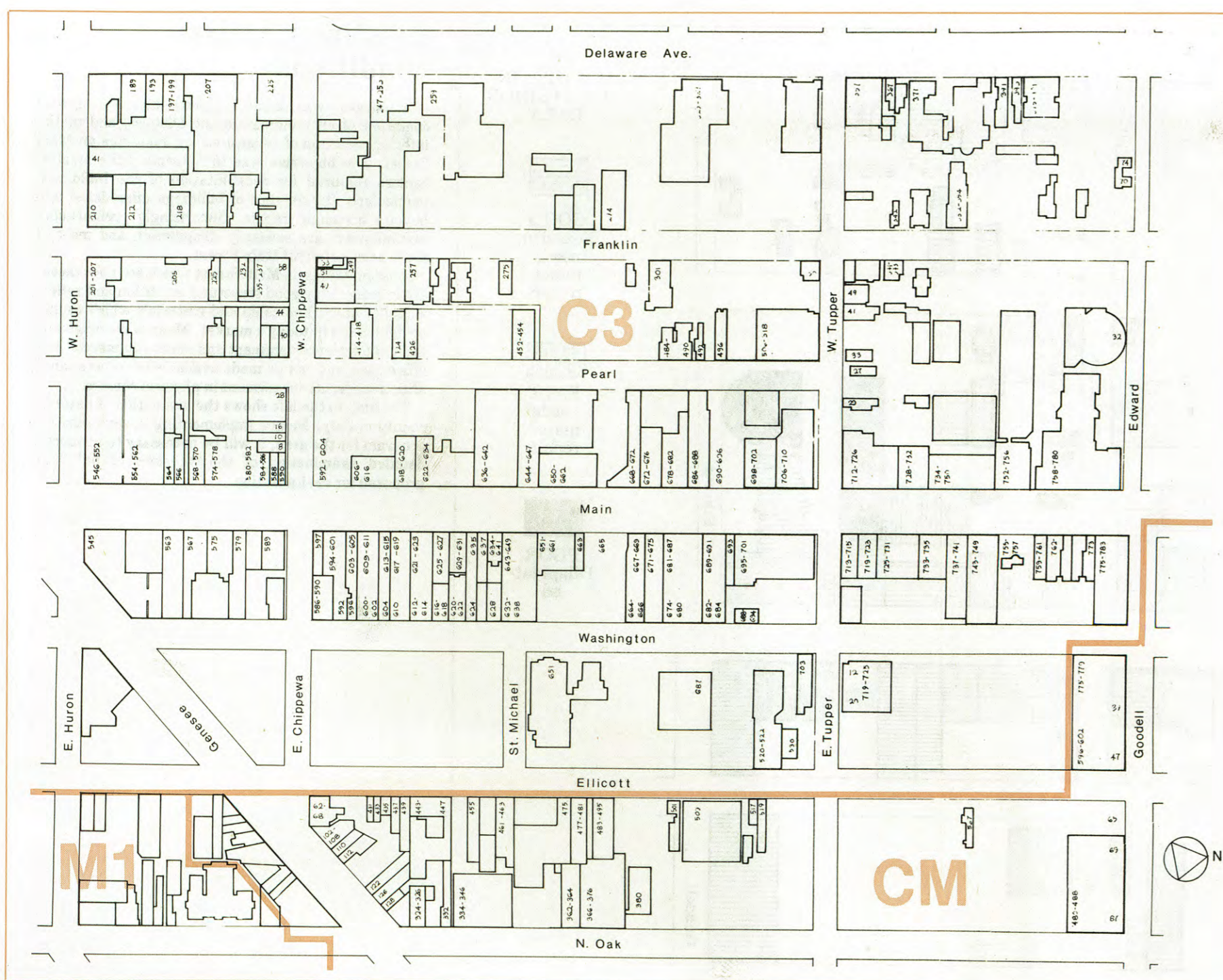
A repeated complaint was that businesses were being harassed by the City's Department of Transportation, which some considered overly zealous in ticketing parked cars throughout the area. Inadequate parking and street lighting deterred many people from coming into the area. The lack of a first-run movie house or of good restaurants gives them no reason to come. There were repeated complaints about slumlords, absentee property owners and building speculators. The lack of decent housing opportunities in the area was seen as a limitation on revitalization. At the moment, some new housing is being constructed around the periphery of the District. The largest is the \$5.2-million, 160-unit Burnie C. McCarley Gardens, to be operated by St. John Baptist Church and funded through Federal Section 8 subsidies. Residential rehabilitation is also proceeding in the West Village area on South Elmwood Avenue and in Allentown. However, these developments are so far away that they are unlikely by themselves to generate much patronage for a revitalized Entertainment District.



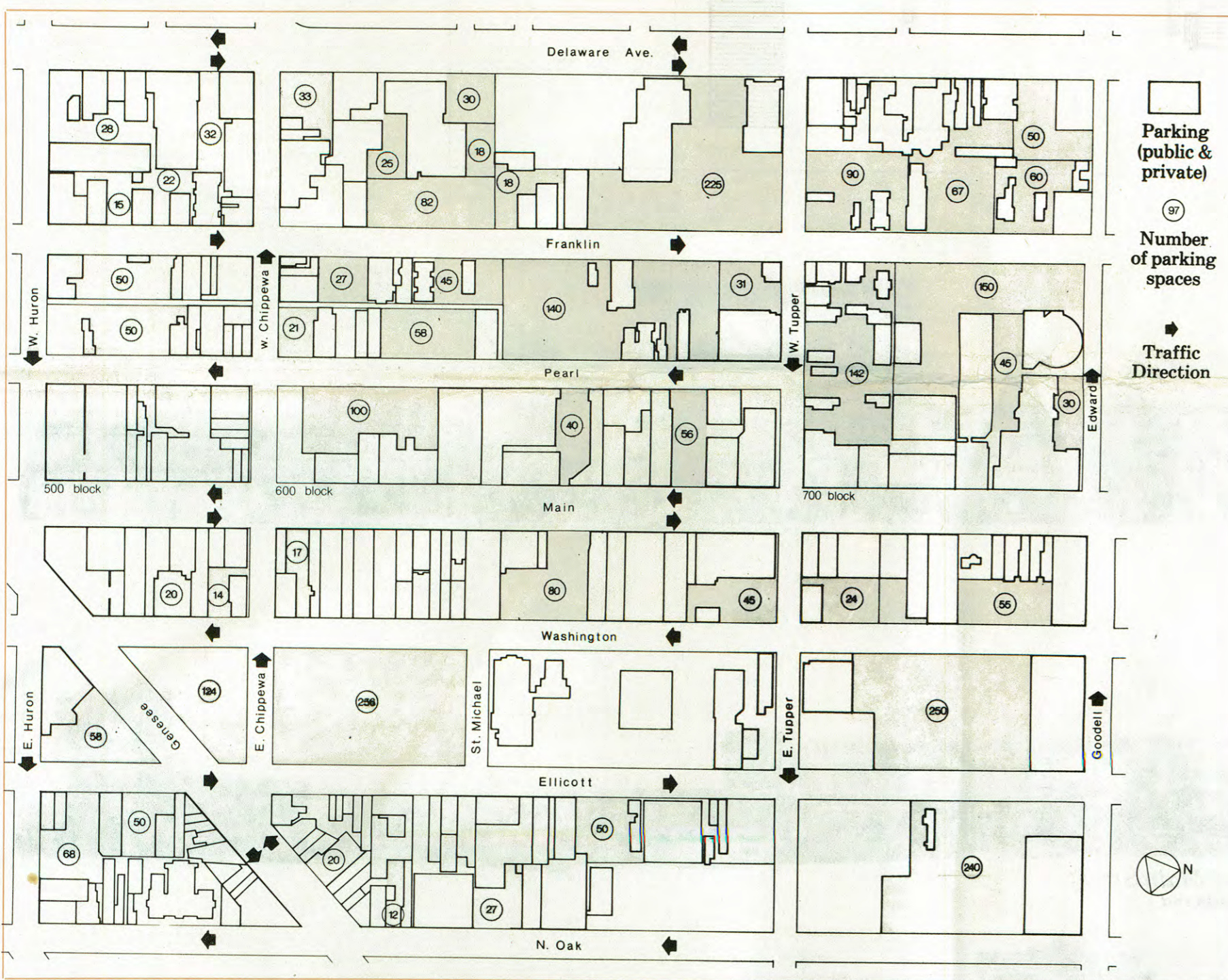
Existing property ownership



Existing activities and institutions



Existing zoning and building numbers



Existing traffic and parking

Use†	Building Space (GFA)		Parking Ratio (Spaces/1000 sf)	Parking Spaces Required by Present Occupancy
	Total sf	Occupied sf		
Commercial	1,450,000	576,000* sf	x 2.5	= 1,438 spaces
Retail	951,000	238,000* sf	x 3.0	= 714 spaces
Residential	422,000	114,000 sf	x 0.8	= 91 spaces
Light Industrial	188,000	169,000 sf	x 1.9	= 321 spaces
Existing Parking Spaces	Off-street	3,753 spaces existing		Total 2,564 spaces
	On-street	870 spaces existing		
	Total	4,623 spaces existing		
Occupied	70% of 4,623		=	3,236 spaces
Surplus	30% of 4,623		=	1,387 spaces
Spillover	3,236 occupied, less 2,564 required		=	672 spaces

Table IV: Existing parking within the District

† Definitions of each use category are included in the Keys to the Land Use maps on pages 8 and 18.
*GFA: The Gross Floor Area shown for occupied commercial and retail space is 80% of the actual amount occupied, to allow for the lower intensity of occupancy in the District.

Existing zoning

The Entertainment District is divided into three separate zoning districts. These reflect the character of the area when it was surveyed in the late 1930's, and have remained relatively unchanged for nearly a quarter century. The common characteristic of these districts is their generosity in permitting a wide range of often incompatible uses to mix freely. These zoning categories are:

C-3 Central Business District. This designation incorporates most of the Entertainment District and is the most restrictive of the three. It does, however, permit uses which may be incompatible with entertainment and retail sales: for instance, auto repair, bottling works, soap manufacture, plastics and electrical fabrication.

CM General Commercial District. Essentially the same as the Central Business District, this designation permits an even more generous list of industrial uses. These include automobile tire retreading, sausage manufacturing and the storage of livestock feed.

M-1 Light Industrial District. Permitted uses under this designation include "coal pockets, tipples and trestles," welding and circus carnivals. The principal controls in the M-1 zone are on noise or smoke pollution. Most housing is also specifically prohibited.

Sign Control. Other city ordinances also control the type, size and placement of signs. The present limitations have had a negligible impact on improving the visual quality of the downtown — signs of up to two feet high and 450 square feet can be erected without a permit.

Historic Preservation. Areas surrounding the Entertainment District are also regulated by other kinds of official restrictions. Allentown and the West Village on South Elmwood Avenue were recently declared Preservation Districts under the City Landmark Ordinance. Exterior physical alterations in these areas must now receive the prior permission of the Landmark and Preservation Board and the Common Council. Much of the land to the east of Main Street is part of the Oak Street Urban Renewal Area. Development in this area would be controlled by state and federal urban renewal regulations rather than the city zoning ordinances.

Existing transportation

Access: Aside from morning and evening rush hours, the District is readily accessible by automobile within a half hour from most parts of the metropolitan area.

Present movement patterns in the District consist largely of commuters from northern areas traveling to and from Downtown. All streets are heavily travelled, but have adequate capacity to handle present traffic loads.

Parking: We are interested in four facts concerning the existing car parking in the District:

- I. How many parking spaces now exist, both public and private?
- II. How many spaces are occupied on a weekday?
- III. How many parking spaces are required by those who use the buildings within the District?
- IV. How many cars are parked within the District, but whose passenger's real destinations "spill-over" to places outside the District?

I. Existing Spaces: From a survey of parking areas, we estimate that the area presently contains parking spaces for 4,623 cars. This includes both public and private parking areas situated on and off street, as indicated in the chart on this page. Parking on street is presently permitted on both sides of most streets in the District.

II. Existing Utilization: Of these 4,623 spaces, only about 70% are presently occupied on a weekday, leaving a surplus of 1,387 spaces.

III. Present Demand From Within the District: In order to calculate the present demand for parking within the District, we have made use of parking ratios recommended* as zoning guidelines in central business districts, as shown below:

Building Use	Min. Parking Spaces Required
Commercial	3.3 per 1000 s.f. of gross floor area (GFA).
Retail	4.0 per 1000 s.f. of GFA.
Entertainment	Evening patrons use same parking as daytime commercial.
Restaurants, etc.	Daytime customers are included in commercial parking.
Residential	1.0 per 1000 s.f. of GFA.
Light Industrial	2.5 per 1000 s.f. of GFA.

The definitions of each use category are given in the keys to the Land Use maps on page 8.

*Source: Highway Records Board, Parking Principles (Special Report No. 125).

These ratios are applied to the Gross Floor Area (GFA) of the occupied buildings, which includes all service areas, such as corridors, stairwells, elevators, etc. The GFA for each building was obtained from the 1977 Polk Business Directory, updated by our own site surveys. In order to take into account the character and intensity of those uses which we have included in the "retail" and "commercial" categories, we have reduced the occupied GFA in these two categories by 20%. For example, the commercial category includes community space, such as an artist's studio, in which there are fewer occupants than in a downtown office).

Since these planning ratios assumed that no public transportation is available, they have also been adjusted to take into account the use of public transportation in Buffalo. The adjustment we made was based upon the NFTA estimates that 25% of all persons coming to downtown presently come via public transit (bus). Thus, in accordance with NFTA estimates, we have reduced the ratios by 25% as indicated below:

Use	Min. Parking Spaces Required
Commercial	2.5 per 1000 s.f. GFA
Retail	3.0 per 1000 s.f. GFA
Residential	0.8 per 1000 s.f. GFA
Industrial	1.9 per 1000 s.f. GFA

Using these ratios, we calculated the demand for parking generated by presently occupied buildings within the District to be 2,564 spaces.

IV. "Spillover" Cars: The number of "spillover" cars now parked within the District, but whose drivers' destinations lie outside the District, was calculated to be 672 cars — as shown on Table IV, on this page.

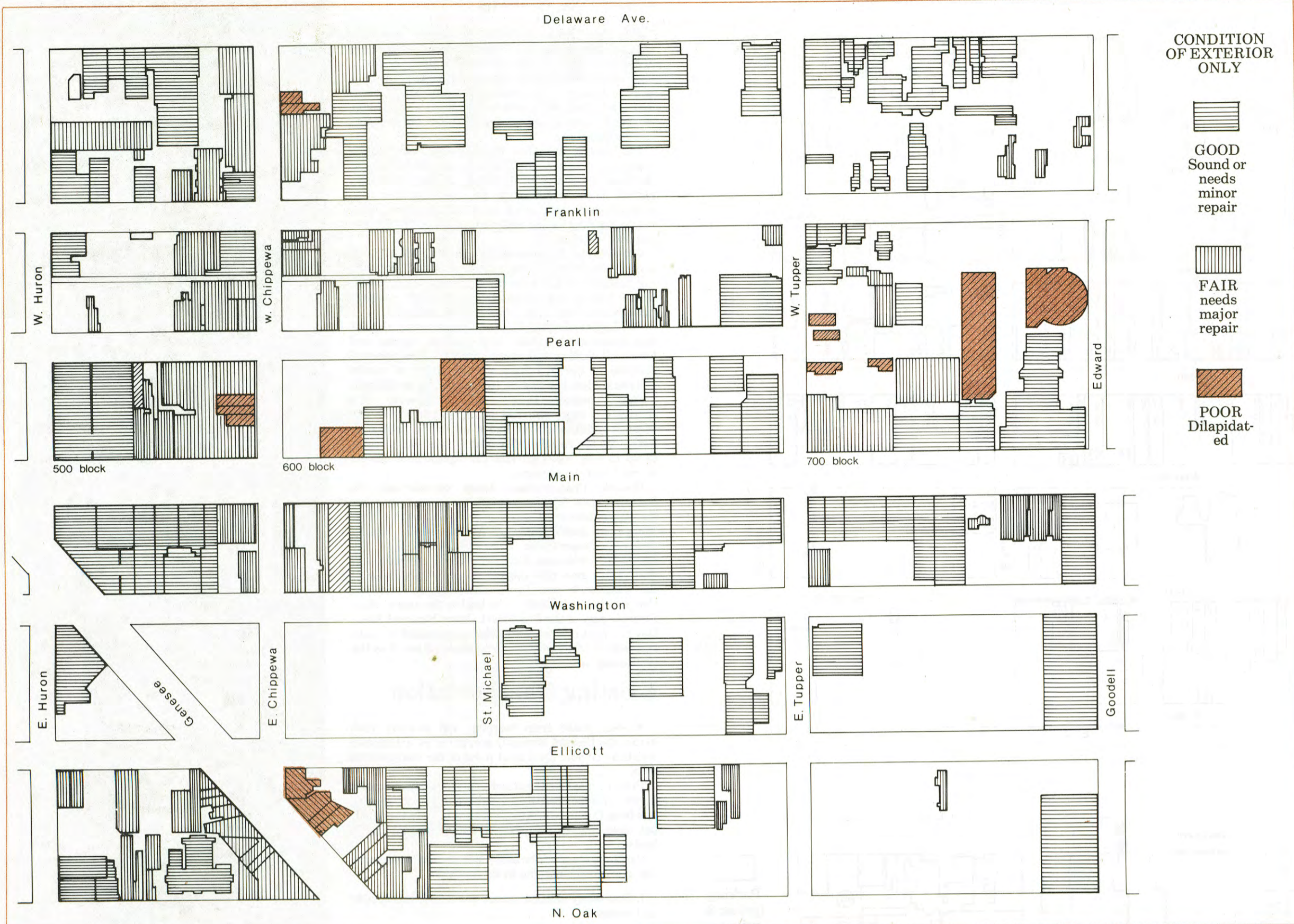
This significant number of "spillover" cars — which amounts to over 20% of all cars now parked in the District — imposes a major constraint on the future development of the District, discussed further on page 21.

Existing physical conditions

A survey was made of the exterior physical condition of all buildings in the District, and of the interior condition of several vacant buildings on Main Street. The objective was to determine the level of repairs required for rehabilitation of the buildings, particularly the number of buildings dilapidated and beyond economic repair. Surprisingly, remarkably few buildings are seriously dilapidated, and most of these are located off Main Street.

Most buildings on Main Street which are now vacant are in reasonably good structural condition and reflect a quality of workmanship and materials which cannot be duplicated in today's market. Many were originally designed for entertainment and small commercial and office uses, and can be made available for reoccupancy after a moderate investment in physical repairs.

The map to the left shows the evaluation of exterior condition only. Before implementing a revitalization program for the area, it will be necessary to conduct a detailed examination of the interiors of buildings proposed for revitalization.



Physical Conditions



West Side of Main Street
600 Block - south end



East Side of Main Street
600 Block - north end

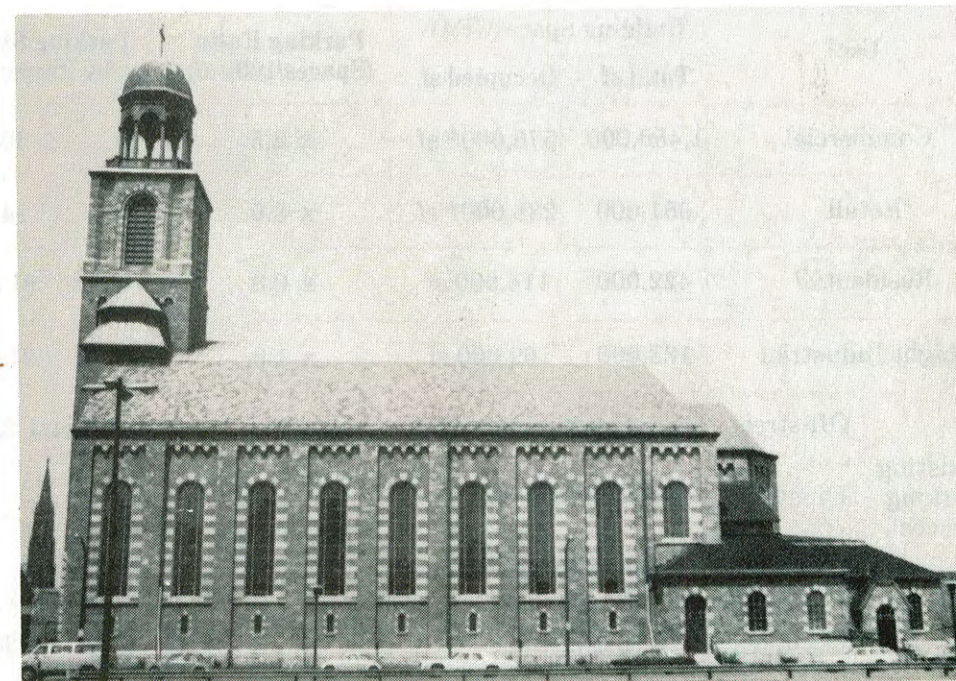


West side of Washington Street
Showing Market Arcade

Washington Market
Site of Buffalo Savings parking lot



Niagara Mohawk Power Company Tower
From the north



St. Michael's Church
From the south



Southeast side of Genesee Street
Between Ellicott and Oak



East side of Ellicott Street
Near Genesee

Existing architectural character

A unique attribute of the District is the architectural character of many of its buildings. It is largely because the area has not been redeveloped that it still retains a large stock of structures built between 1890 and 1930. These structures present many fine examples of classical revival architecture, typical of the period following the Columbian and Pan American Expositions.

The character of the buildings in the District can be described in two ways. First, there are the individual buildings, some of which are architecturally distinguished and historically important. Second, there is the total effect of many buildings produced by "facade combinations," or groups of adjacent buildings. Thus, while a building may be relatively undistinguished when standing on its own, it may be an important part of the street scene created by the connected facades of many buildings of similar character. In addition, a building can be in a poor state of repair, yet still be classified as a landmark. Whether it is to be preserved will have to be judged on its importance to the character of the whole ensemble.

In order to identify the importance of each building, we first categorized each building as an individual and/or a group landmark and then rated the building according to a scoring system.

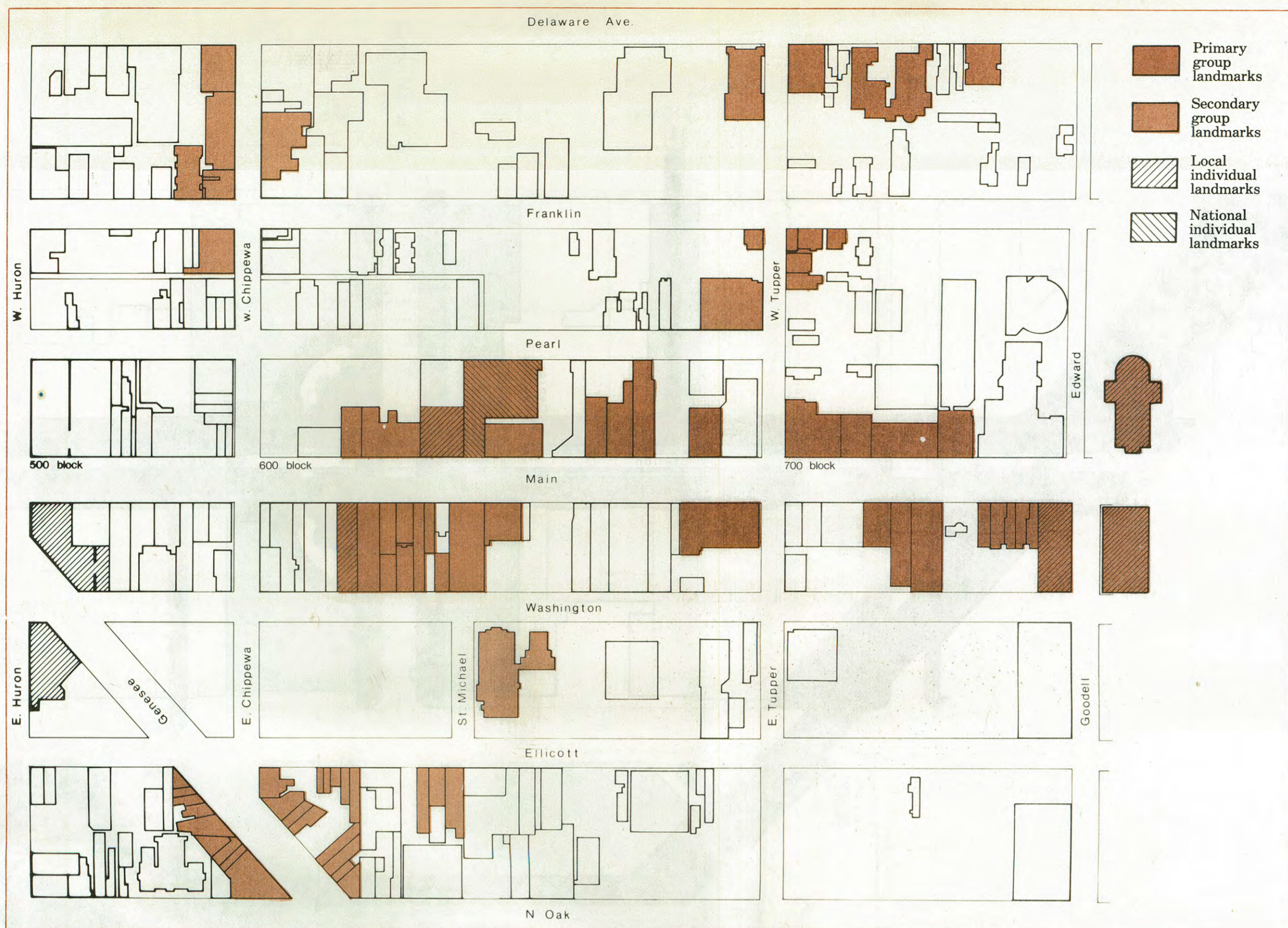
Individual landmarks are rated in two classes:

1. of regional significance (e.g. Shea's, which is a national historic landmark)
2. of local significance (e.g. the Market Arcade, which is a city landmark).

Group landmarks are also rated in two classes:

1. Class 1: Buildings which should be preserved because they are essential to our urban design scheme (e.g. the buildings immediately north of the Arcade facing west to Main Street and east to the site of the former Washington Market)
2. Class 2: Buildings which should also be preserved, but which are less important (e.g. the buildings at Oak and Genesee Streets, which are separated from the main groupings situated nearer the middle of the District).

Our survey concluded that many buildings of high architectural character and repairable structural condition have unique potential for revitalization — particularly on the 600 Block of Main Street and around the former Washington Market.



Architectural Character



West Side of Main Street
600 block - north end

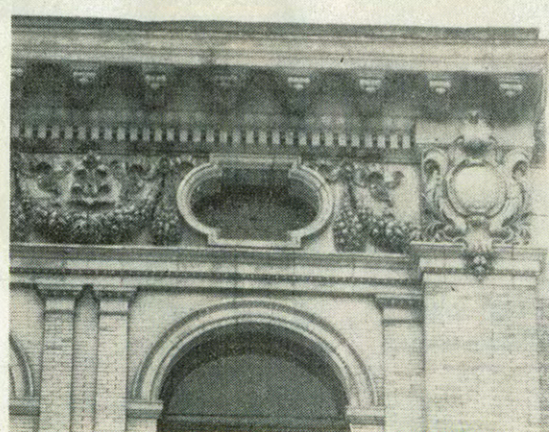


East side of Main Street
600 block - south end

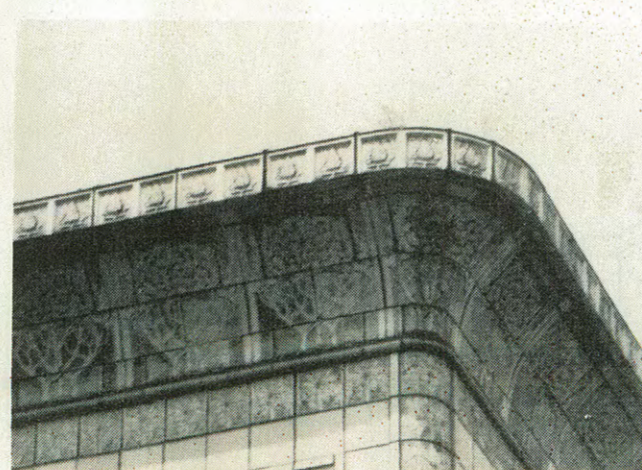


Grand Staircase
Shea's Buffalo Theater

Courtesy The Friends of the Buffalo Theater, Inc.



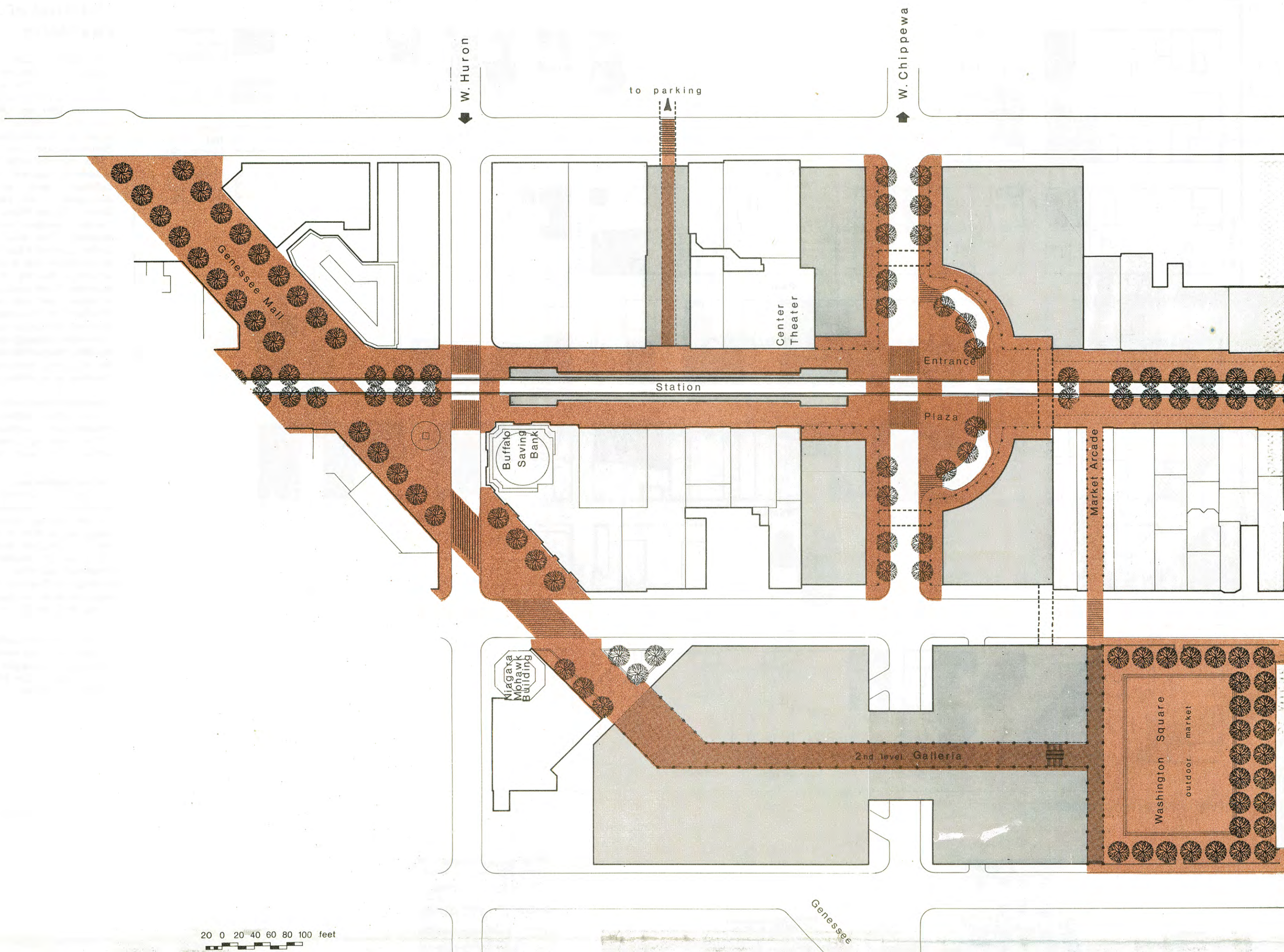
Cornice of Wurlitzer Building
674 - 676 Main Street



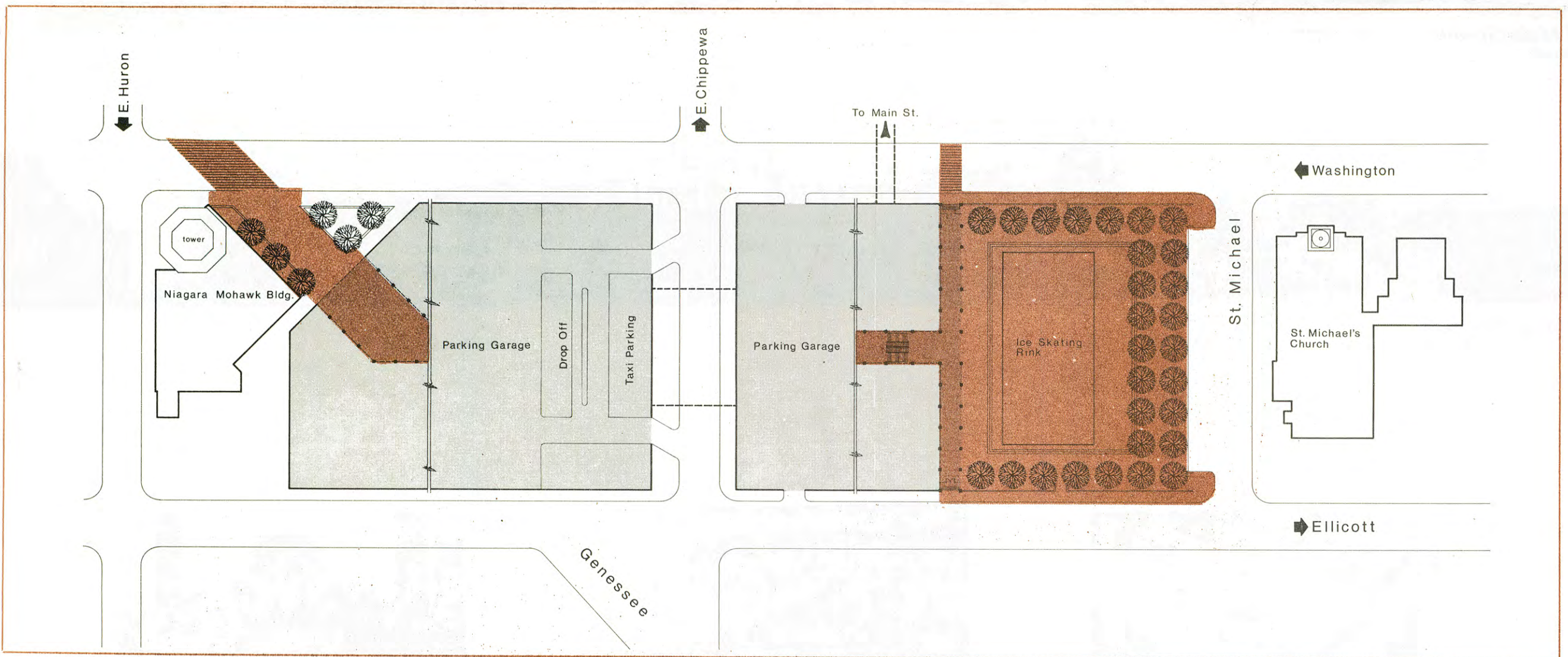
Tiled Cornice of Ansonia Building
712-726 Main Street



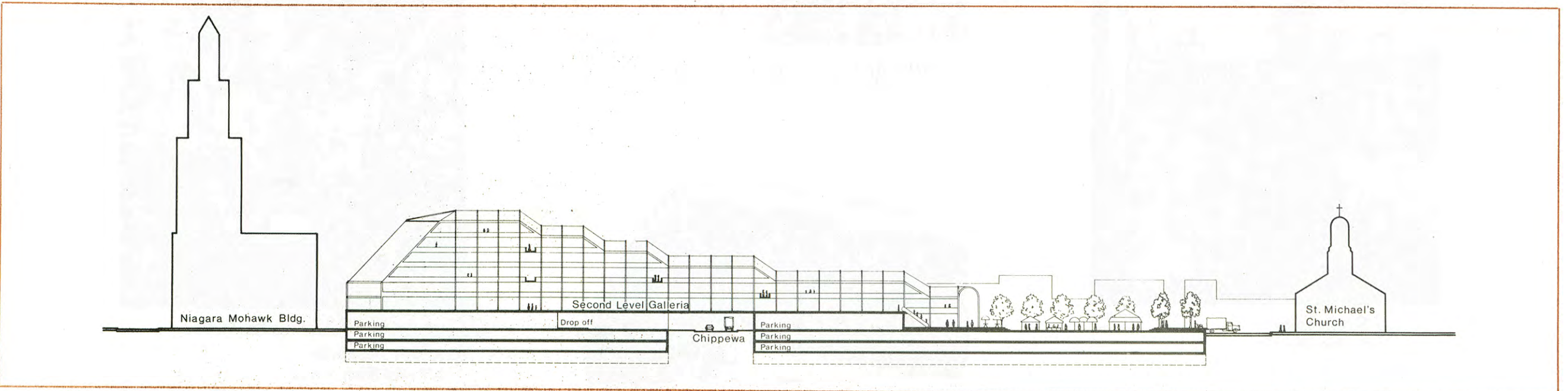
Keystone of Main Arch on
Market Arcade
617 - 619 Main Street



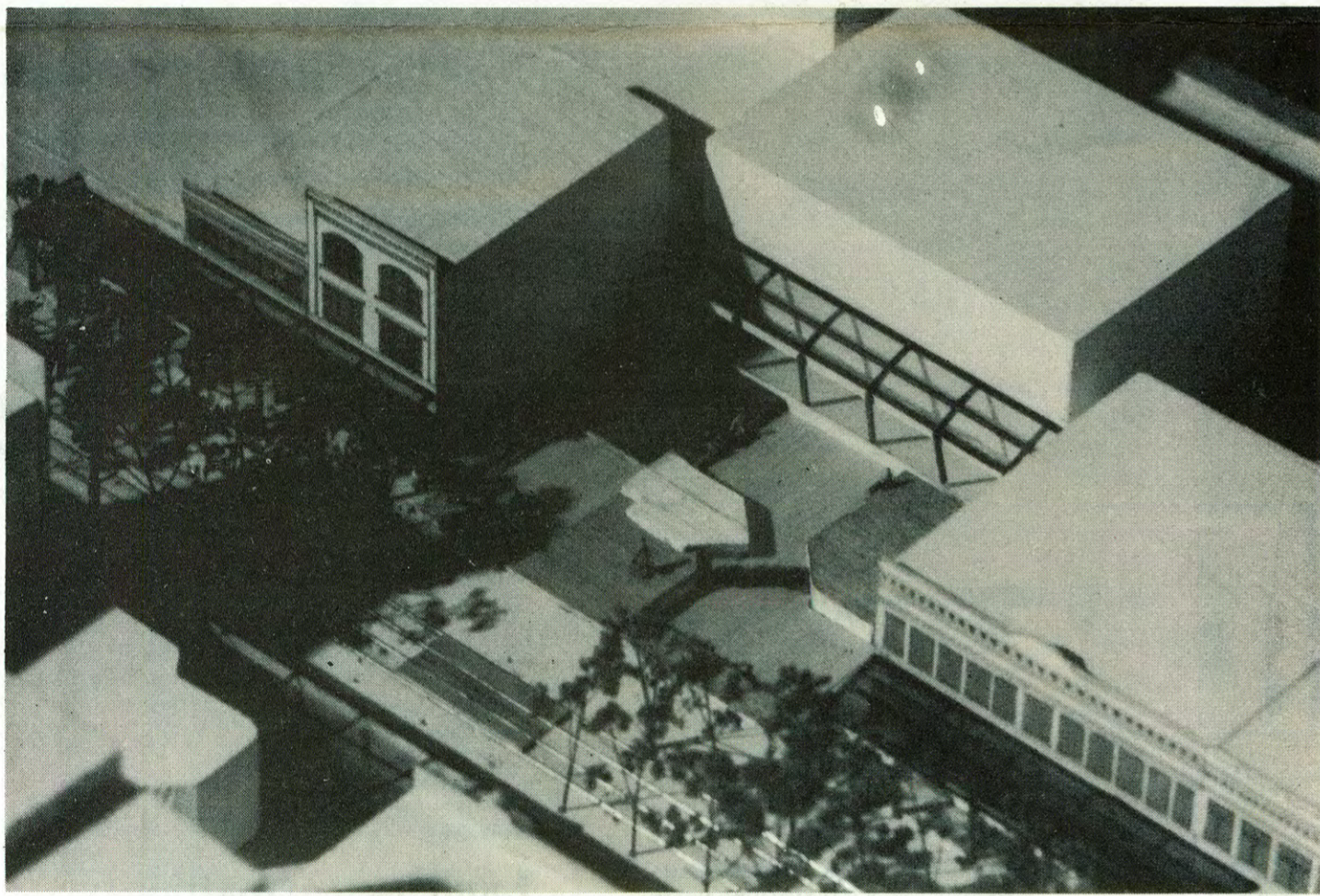
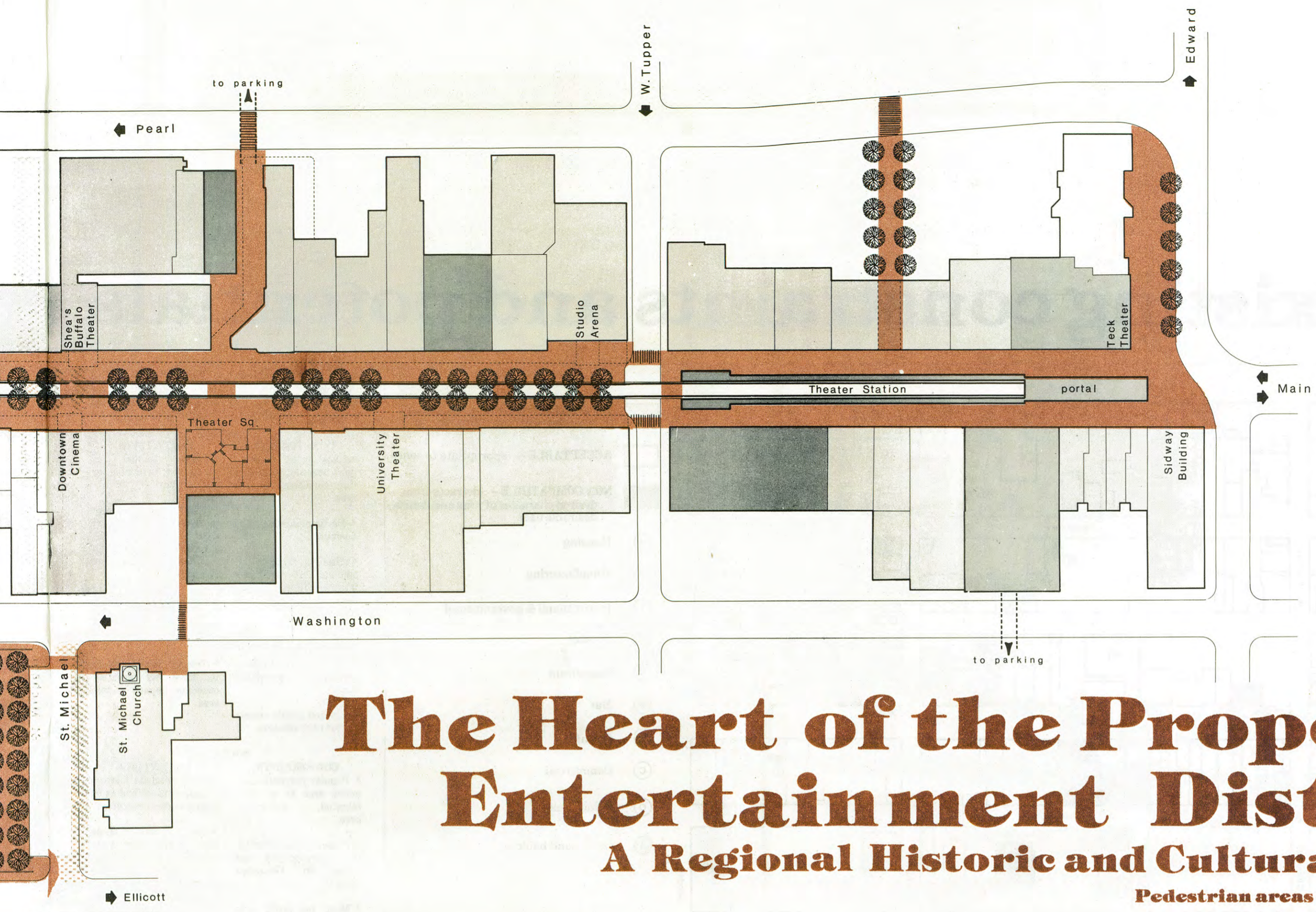
Plan at street level of Main Street Mall in summer - with market on Washington Square
 Washington Square Shopping Galleria shown at second level, passing over Chippewa Street



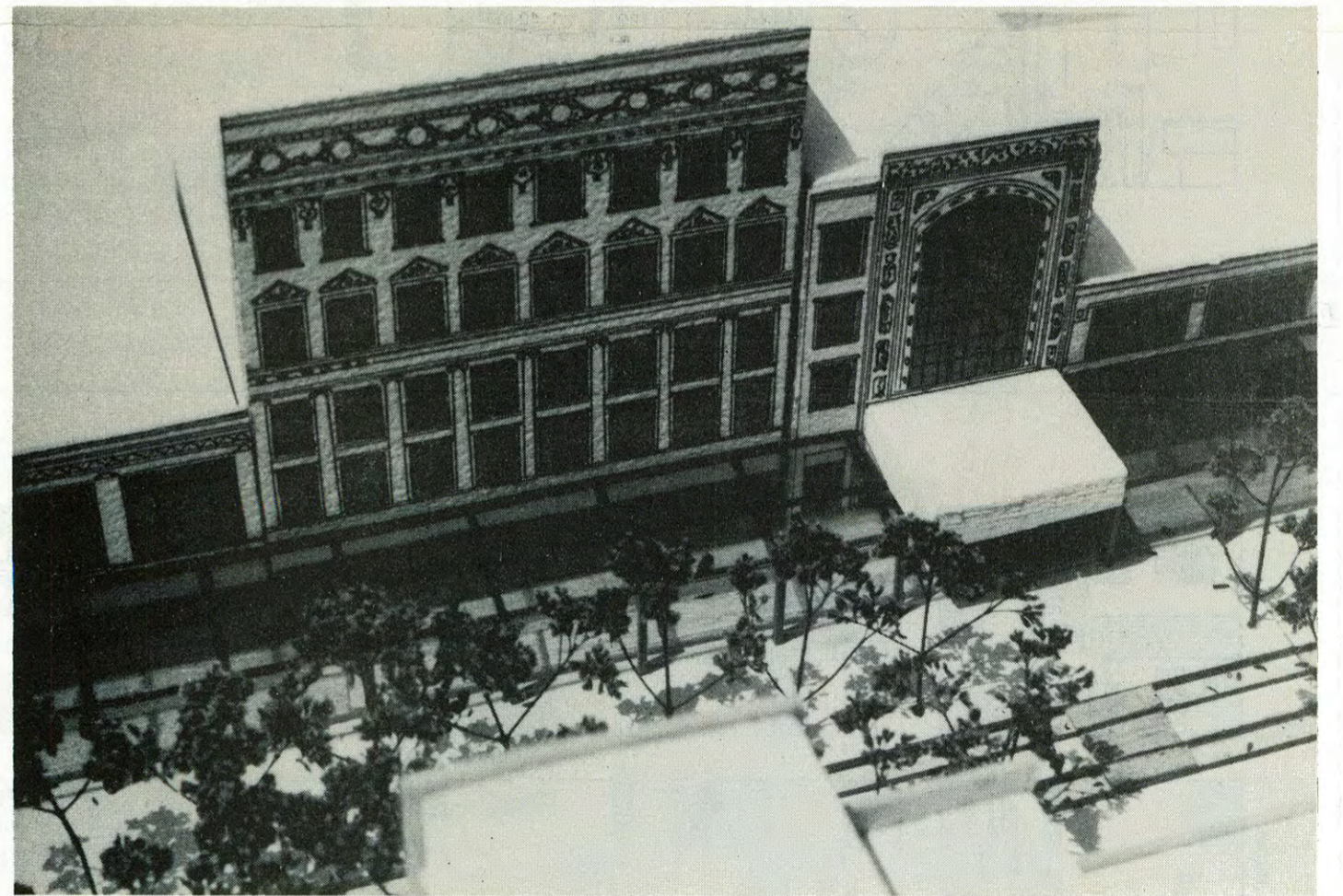
Plan at street level through Washington Square in winter - with ice skating on the Square
 Washington Square Galleria building shown with underground parking entrances off Chippewa Street



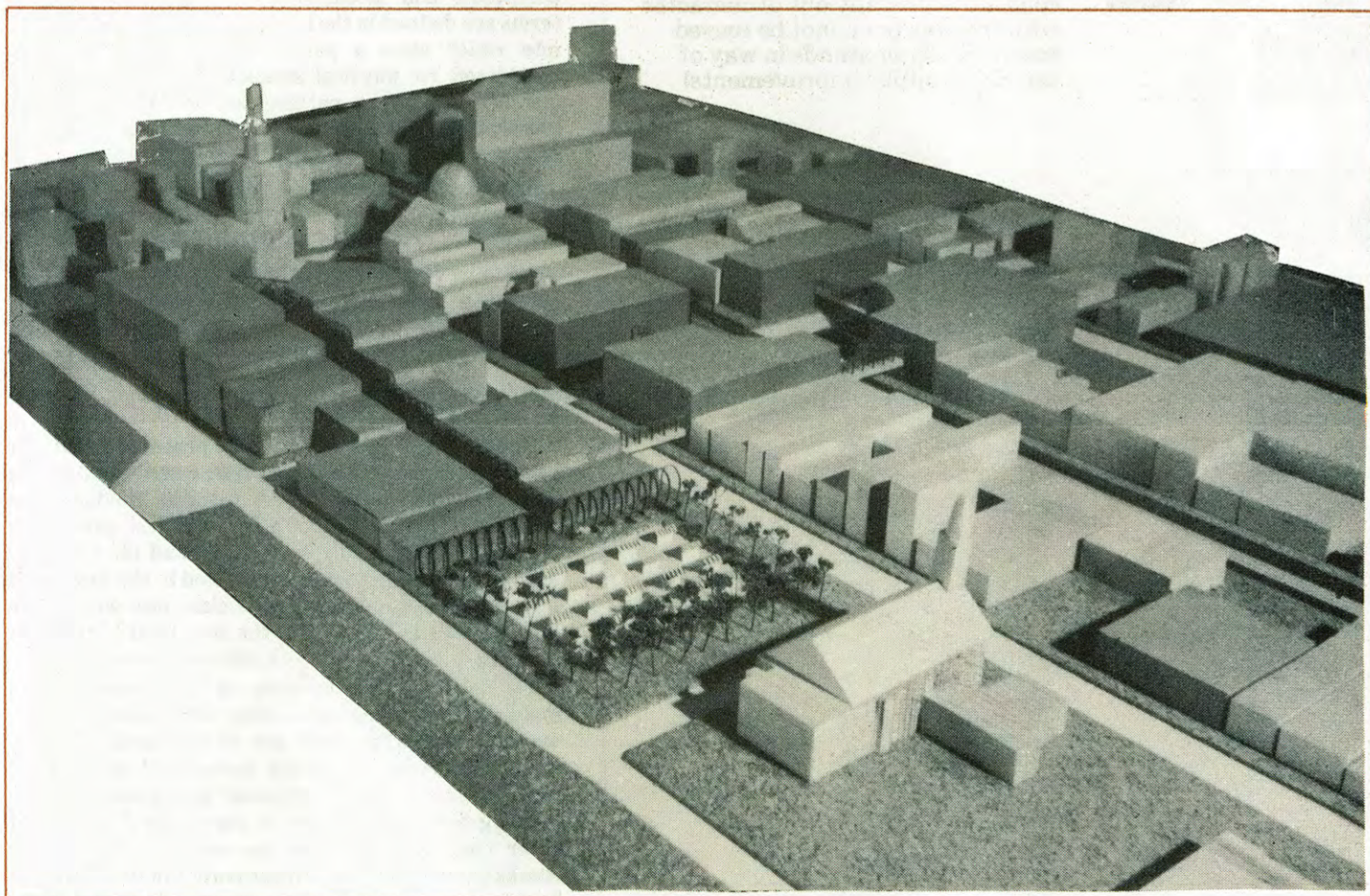
Section through Washington Square in summer - with market on the Square



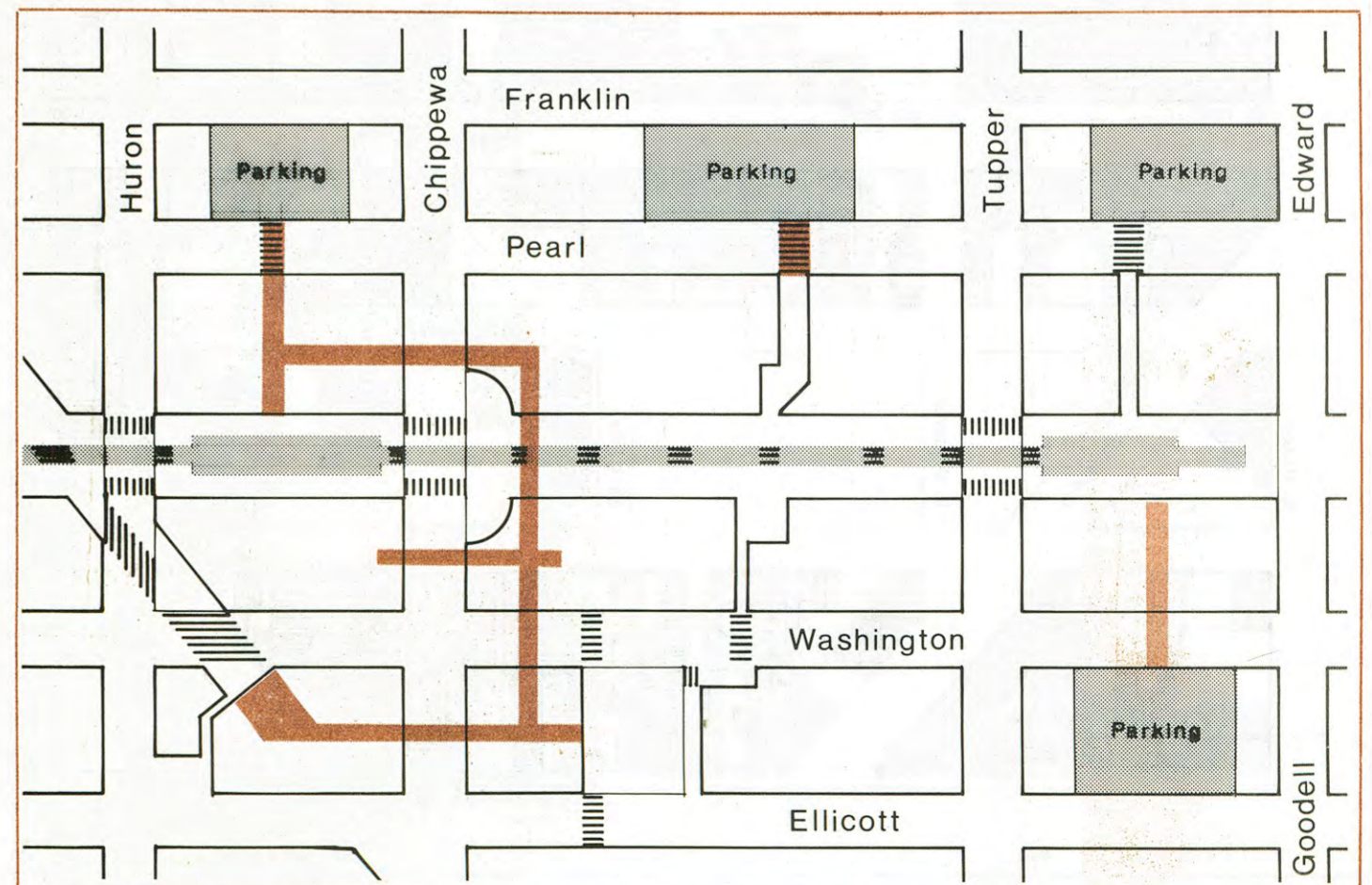
Model of Theater Square
 From the west



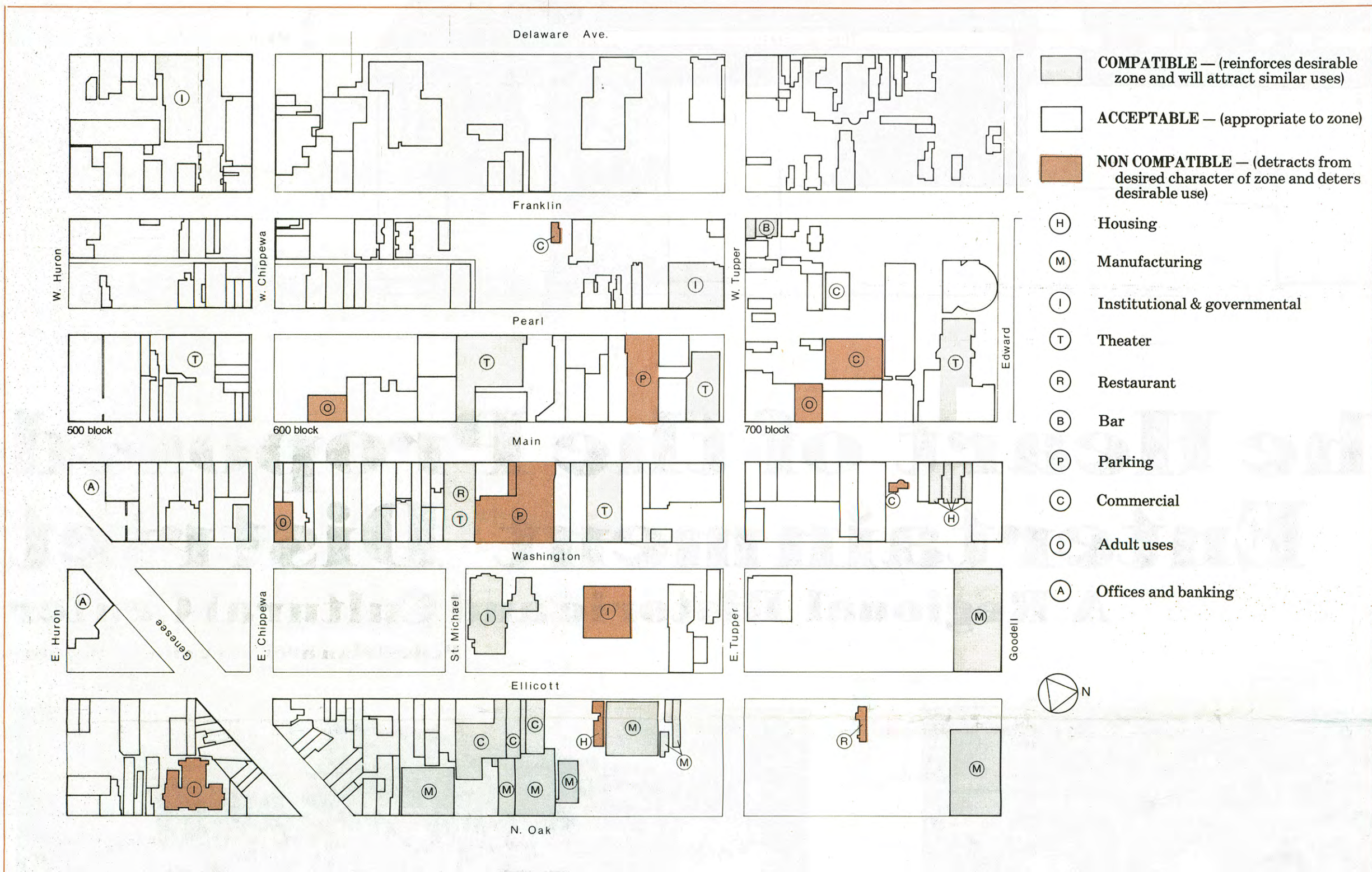
Model of Main Street Mall
 From the east: showing Shea's Buffalo.



Aerial view of model
 From the northeast: showing Washington Square



Existing constraints and potentials



Existing land use compatibility



Existing site constraints

GENERAL: As a conclusion of our survey of existing conditions, we present below what we feel are the major constraints and opportunities for development. Each is addressed by our urban design scheme presented in the following sections.

ECONOMIC

CONSTRAINTS

- Lack of an economic generator and weak existing conditions in core area.
- Declining and marginal business.
- Title to a significant amount of core area impaired by several pending bankruptcy proceedings.
- Present downtown area far too large to be supported by Buffalo's shrinking population base.
- Limited public resources for revitalization.

POTENTIALS

- Large amount of vacant space available for reoccupancy.
- Significant opportunity for public acquisition of land with development potential; several large private land assemblages already exist.
- In close proximity to Convention Center and the Downtown office District.
- Transit system likely to have its greatest economic impact in this area.

SOCIAL

CONSTRAINTS

- Popular perceptions of entire area as an ugly, blighted, high-crime area.
- Presence of prostitution, pornography and crime on Chippewa Street.
- Most non-profit arts and ethnic groups lack capital and management skills to survive in the area on their own.

POTENTIALS

- Because of its history, popularly identified as an entertainment center.
- Existing core of three high-quality legitimate theaters.
- Large number of non-profit arts and ethnic groups and organizations are seriously interested in moving into district.

PHYSICAL

CONSTRAINTS

- Some buildings in poor state of repair.
- Many buildings cluttered with ugly signs.
- Inadequate lighting in area.
- Parking inadequate to service area when buildings are reoccupied.
- Location of transit line at grade in mid-street and placement of a station between Huron and Chippewa Streets.
- Lack of effective urban design controls.
- Zoning allows inappropriate uses and densities.
- Large number of "spill-over" cars are parked in the district.

POTENTIALS

- Although old and vacant, many buildings are structurally sound.
- Large number of buildings originally designed for entertainment uses.
- Main Street to be served by rapid transit Mall in near future.
- First main entrance to downtown off the Kensington Expressway and Elm-Oak Arterial.
- Significant quantities of individual and group landmarks, representative of the area's history and possessing strong character.

Land use compatibility

To further define the constraints and opportunities presented by existing land uses, we have mapped what we consider to be examples of compatible, acceptable and incompatible classes of use. These terms are defined in the key to the map. To determine into which class a particular use falls, we have considered its physical location in the district: for instance, a surface parking lot on Main Street is inappropriate, but it is quite acceptable on Pearl Street.

The map illustrates two points. First, inadequate zoning and land use controls have permitted too broad a mix of uses, some of which are detrimental to the function of the area. Second, there is a surprisingly solid core of mutually reinforcing uses on the the 600 Block of Main Street — primarily the three functioning legitimate theaters.

Site constraints

The second map to the left presents what we consider to be the major physical constraints to site development in the district. It classifies buildings that should (1) definitely be preserved, (2) preferably preserved, (3) possibly demolished and (4) definitely demolished. These terms are defined in the key to the map. The determination of the class into which each building falls is based upon the sum total of the data presented in the Existing Conditions section, above.

For instance, in the case of the round stacks building of the long-demolished Grosvenor Library, we are aware that some are of the opinion that it should be preserved merely because of its age and shape. However, the physical appearance of the building does not compare to the classical facades of other buildings of similar age on the 600 and 700 Blocks of Main Street. Furthermore, the structure has been vacant for decades, is in physically poor condition, and creates a serious obstruction to essential street improvements in the area.

Proposed urban design concept

Introduction

Based upon our identification of constraints and on potentials for development in the Entertainment District, there are a number of positive characteristics which can be identified:

- There is a core of existing buildings (many of which were designed for entertainment uses) possessing unique architectural character.

- Existing and planned major new public works (like the Convention Center and the rapid transit system) are renewing interest in the area as a focus for private reinvestment.

- The concept of an entertainment district is an appealing addition to maturing plans to develop a service economy in the core of the metropolitan area.

- There is an opportunity (perhaps unique in American cities) for direct public control over much development in the District.

- There is widespread public support among arts and ethnic organizations in the City to participate in the development of the District.

Yet, while there is now general agreement on the desirability of an entertainment theme in the northern half of the Central Business District, the factors which make it feasible have been known for a decade. We feel strongly that the problems and constraints identified earlier make it futile at this time to engage in conventional market analysis. Such research would only tend to show that there is little or no demand for new construction in the area. It is because of this apparent lack of demand that we have approached the problem by attempting to create demand through the following simultaneous means: What is needed is (1) a combination of a powerful urban design scheme to generate and mobilize public support for development; (2) the creation of a coordinating entity and a set of procedures to implement and to manage development; and (3) direct public action beyond the usual public works programs.

In this section, we shall discuss the general design concepts we think will satisfy the first of these requirements; later, we discuss the details of our design scheme, as well as our suggestions for implementing the plan.

The scheme

There are five elements to our concept:

- TARGETING resources to a core area -- the heart of the Entertainment District shown on page 14 and 15;
- LINKING this core to surrounding support areas;

- GIVING the core a special physical and social character;
- PROVIDING adequate weather protection for pedestrians;

- OPTIMIZING the economic impact of the transit stations.

The core area identified from our analysis of constraints and opportunities is the 600 Block of Main Street, between Chippewa and Tupper Streets. This block is characterized by a number of buildings having significant architectural character, by the presence of three legitimate theaters which can serve as the "magnets" around which a family entertainment theme can be built, and by a continuing strong identification of the area in the public's mind as an entertainment center. It will also be served directly by the proposed rapid transit system, which will be built down the center of Main Street, and by the downtown pedestrian transit mall.

Our approach to giving this core a special character is not only through architectural restoration and preservation, but also through revitalization -- finding new uses for old buildings. These two attitudes toward urban design can be summarized as follows:

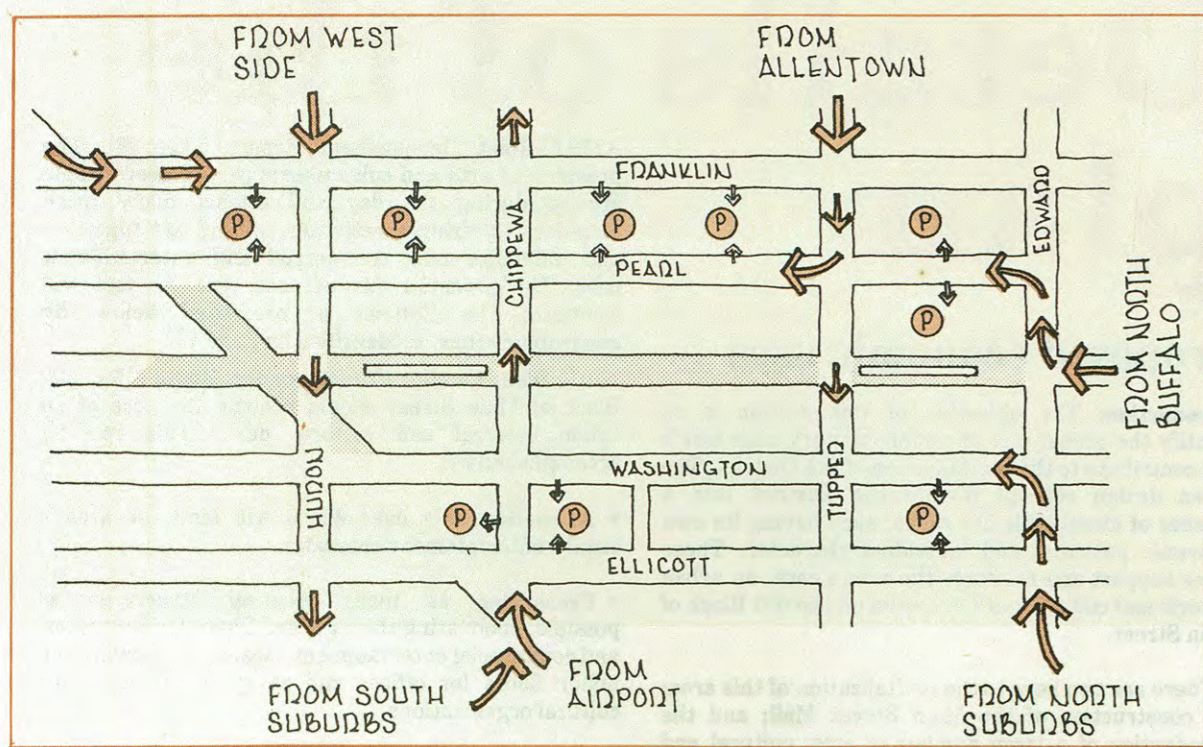
- RESTORATION/PRESERVATION, as typified by Colonial Williamsburg or by Old Sturbridge Village, assumes that a building should be restored as closely as possible to its original state and should be maintained as an example of its period. This view is undoubtedly appropriate for structures such as Shea's Buffalo Theater.

- REVITALIZATION, a point of view which is steadily gaining popularity, recognizes that there are many buildings not of monumental importance, but possessing character, quality and style, and of genuine community value. Such buildings are modified by time and by the changing attitudes of their users. The concept of revitalization assumes that one accepts and uses the best of what exists, restores where economically feasible, and combines new with old when appropriate.

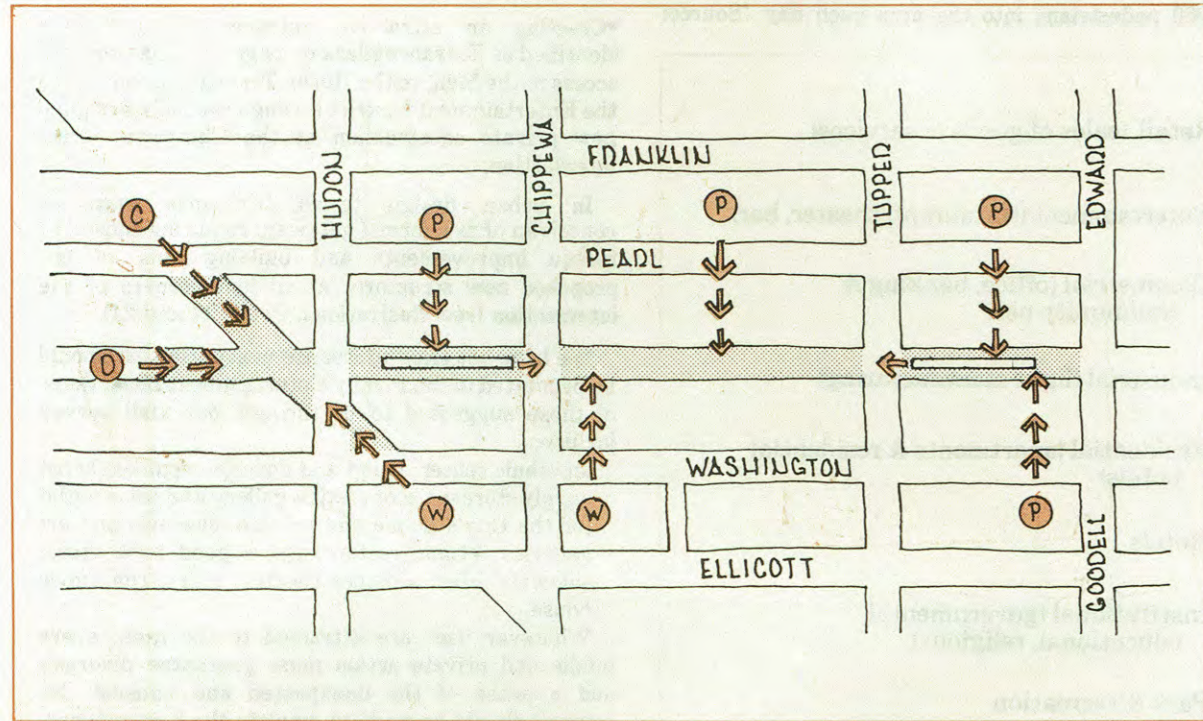
a regional historic and cultural center. If this recommendation is accepted, it is critical that there be convenient access to the Core, not only from the transit line, but also by automobile. We propose that parking structures be situated on the periphery of the Core, and that they be linked directly to the Mall via enclosed pedestrian bridges at the second floor level. Once on Main Street, weather protection must be provided along the Mall itself. Because of the special character of the 600 Block, we recommend the use of permanent glass canopies, with colorful, roll-down awnings beneath. Weather protection on other areas of the Mall, and throughout the Entertainment District, will be treated differently, according to their special character.

Our concept for rapid transit stations is to maximize their economic impact throughout the Entertainment District by placing them strategically on blocks to the north and south of the core 600 Block.

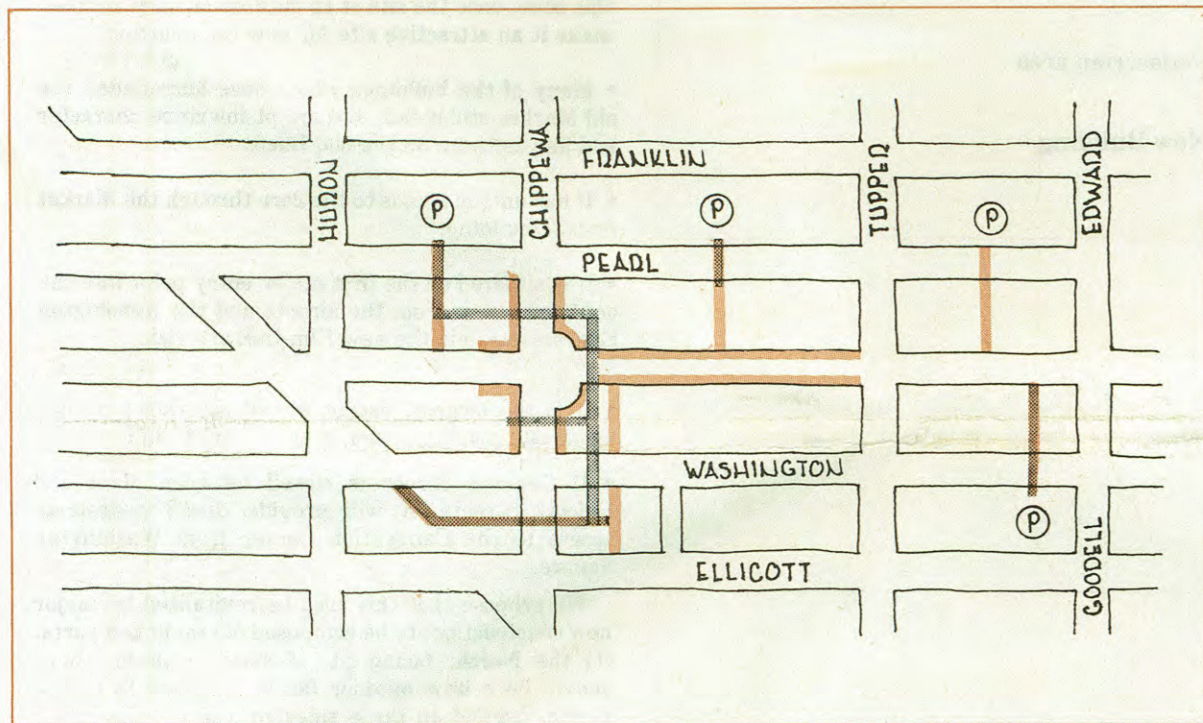
In our opinion, many buildings in the Entertainment District (especially on the core 600 Block, but also on the 700 Block and on Chippewa Street) are ideal candidates for revitalization. We recommend that the District's architectural heritage be combined with the three existing legitimate theaters to form the basis of



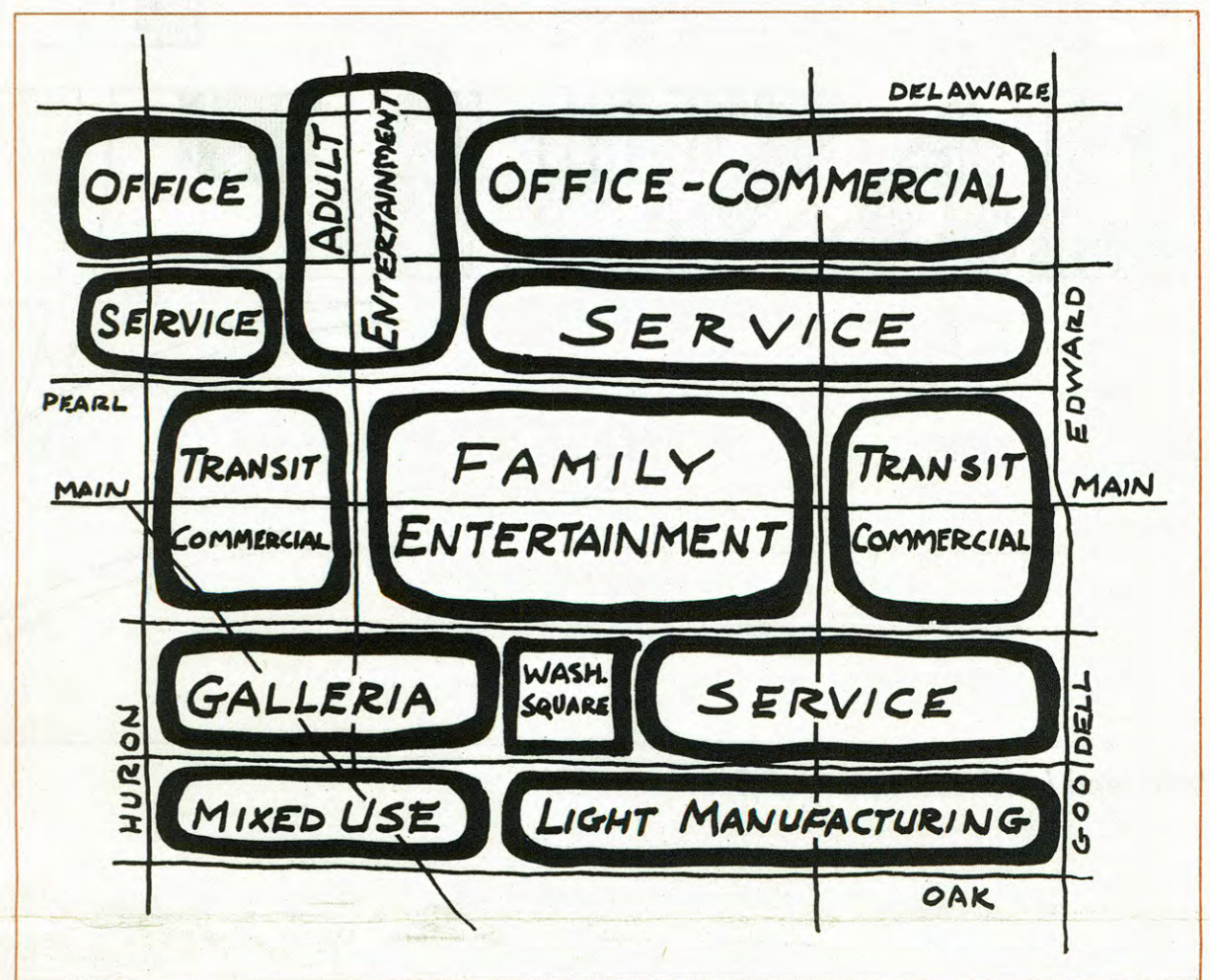
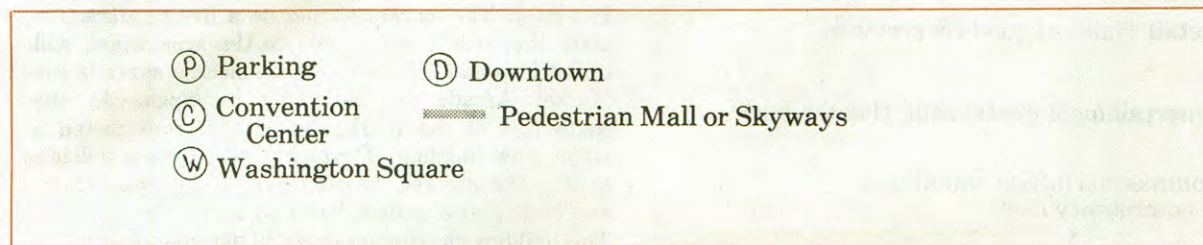
Proposed vehicular access



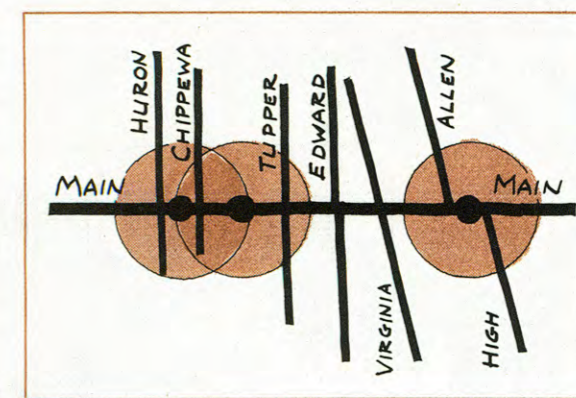
Proposed pedestrian access



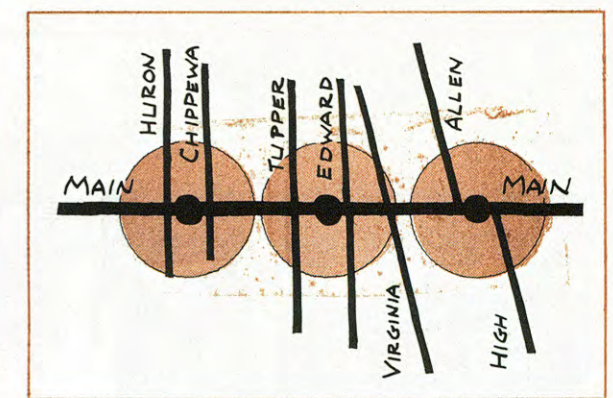
Proposed weather protection



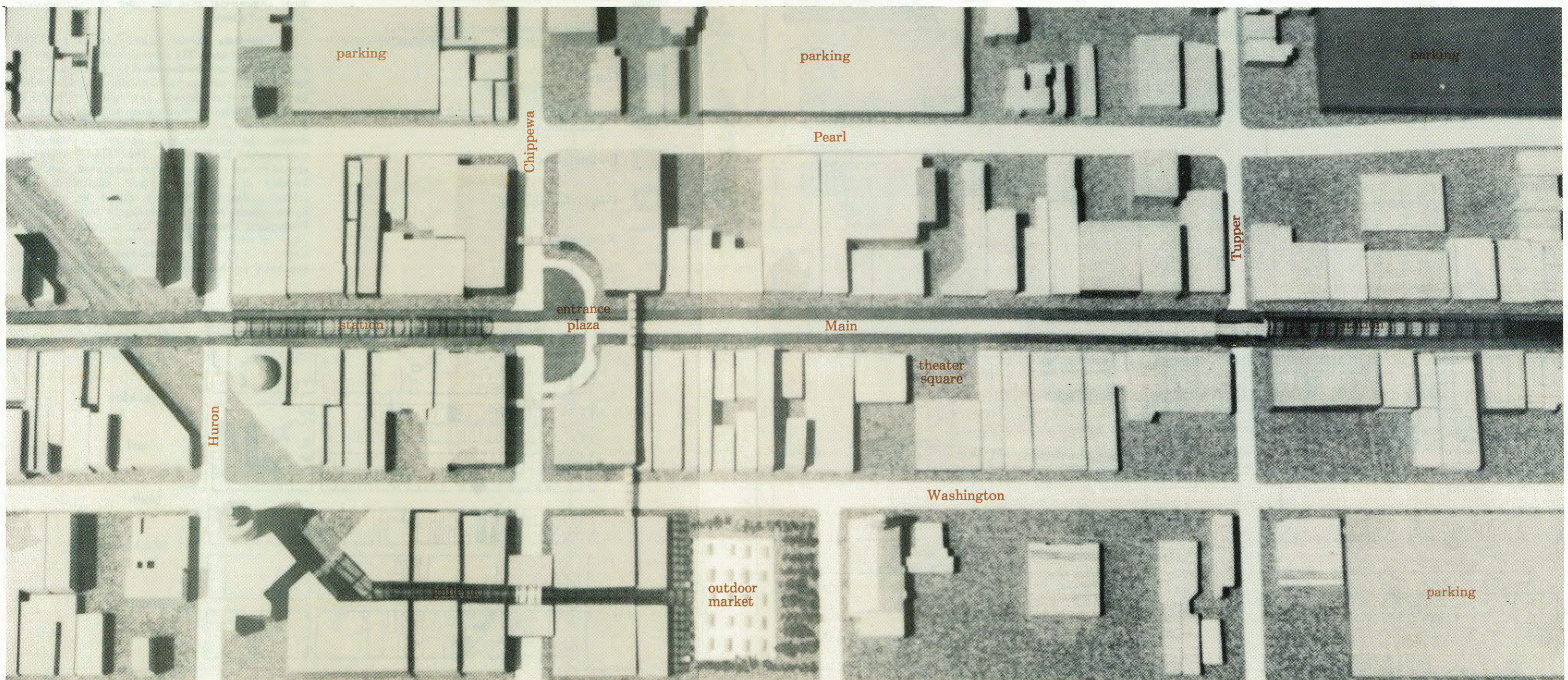
Proposed geographic "use zones"



Original station plan



Proposed station plan



Proposed concept model

Details of the plan

Proposed economic uses

Introduction: The objective of this section is to identify the proper mix of complementary uses which will contribute to the revitalization of the District. The urban design concept divides the District into a number of identifiable use zones, each having its own economic potential and individual character. These zones support and reinforce the area's core, an urban historic and cultural park centered on the 600 Block of Main Street.

There are two keys to the revitalization of this area: the construction of the Main Street Mall; and the introduction of a large number of arts, cultural and commercial organizations into the Core Block. The proposed rapid transit system will attract greatly-needed development capital, and bring an estimated 12,000 pedestrians into the area each day (Source:

AMRA Joint Development Report, page 28). The presence of arts and cultural groups will keep people around during the day and attract many more outsiders to observe activities, attend art functions and patronize new commercial and entertainment uses. The potential mix of uses that we feel will revitalize the District is presented below by geographic zones, as identified on Page 17.

1.) **The Family Entertainment Zone:** The 600 Block of Main Street should become the core of an urban cultural and historic park. This can be accomplished by:

- **Attracting** only uses which will lend the area a family entertainment character.
- **Preserving** as many existing structures as possible, renovating their ground floors for new retail and commercial entertainment uses, and reserving the upper floors for offices and as space for arts and cultural organizations.
- **Giving** the zone a central focus by constructing an outdoor theater-meeting place, identified as **Theater Square** on Page 14.
- **Creating** an attractive entrance to downtown identified as **Entrance Plaza** on page 14. This provides access to the Mall, to the Huron Transit Station and to the Entertainment District through specially designed new private construction at the Chippewa Street intersection.

In urban design terms, Entrance Plaza is conceived of as a formal gateway, requiring control of facade improvements and building bulk of the proposed new structures at all four corners of the intersection (see illustrations, Pages 14 and 24).

We have not tried to itemize every use that should be permitted in the Family Entertainment Zone. Some of those suggested to us through our mail survey include:

an ethnic center; ballet and dance companies; artist supply stores; a cooperative gallery and sales outlet for the City's public and private museums and art galleries; ethnic restaurants; a good book store; sidewalk cafes; a dinner theater; a first-run movie house.

Whatever uses are attracted to the area, every public and private action must guarantee diversity and a sense of the unexpected and unusual. No attempt should be made to emulate the homogenized, bland sterility of suburban shopping malls.

2.) **Washington Square:** Several characteristics of this zone, once the site of an outdoor farmers market, make it an attractive site for new construction:

- Many of the buildings which once surrounded the old Market still stand, and are of the same character and age as those on the 600 Block.
- It has unique access to the core through the Market Arcade building;
- It is situated on the first major entry point into the downtown area from the airport and the Kensington Expressway, via the new Elm-Oak arterial.

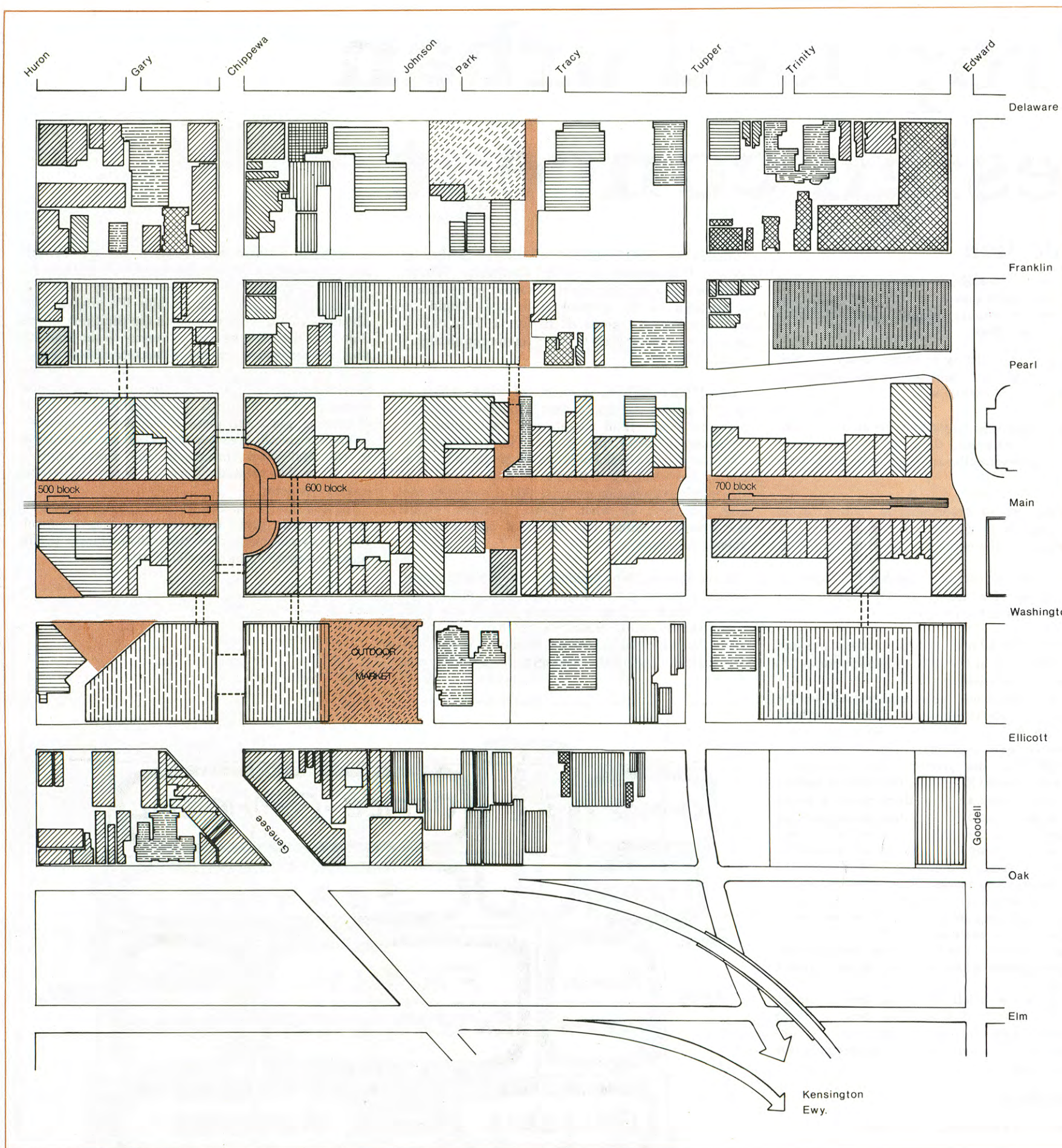
It is the largest, vacant parcel controlled by one legitimate private owner in the District; and

If Genesee Street is closed between Main and Ellicott Streets, it will provide direct pedestrian access to the Convention Center from Washington Square.

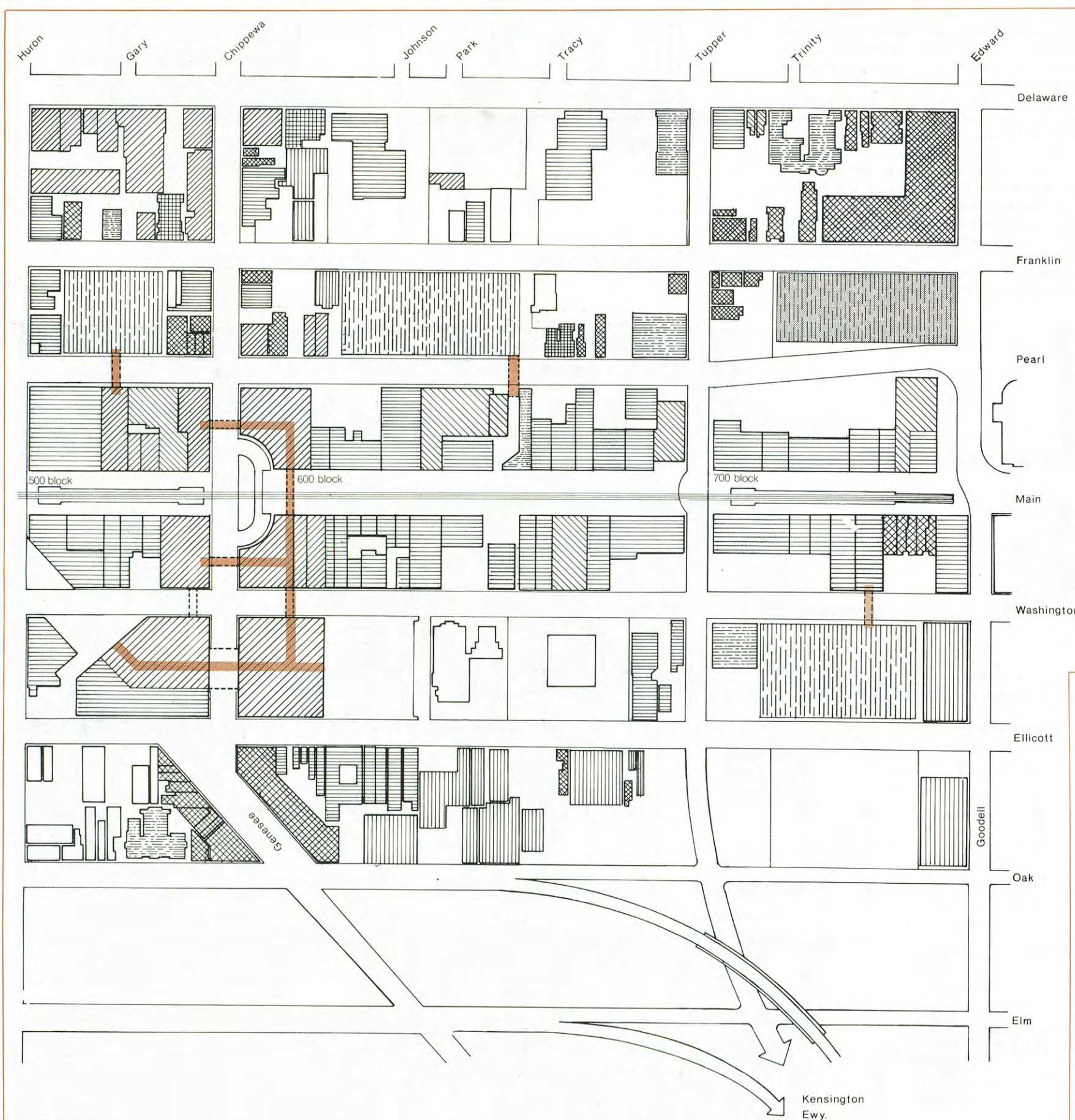
We propose that this area be revitalized by major new construction; to be composed of two linked parts. On the **North**, facing St. Michael's Church, there should be a new outdoor facility, accessible to the public, framed on three sides by the existing older buildings and accessible to the 600 Block through the Market Arcade. We suggest that this facility be used as an outdoor market in summer and as a skating rink in winter. The market should be a lively, attractive place that will draw crowds to the area which will utilize new and rehabilitated commercial space in the Market Arcade and adjoining buildings. At the **south** end of the market should be constructed a major new building. Through it will pass a Galleria linking the market, passing over Chippewa Street, and ending at a pedestrian mall on Genesee Street. This building can contain levels of parking underneath the retail space at the second (galleria) level, and other commercial uses on upper floors (including offices and a hotel).

3.) **Chippewa Street** should become an adult entertainment zone. The current condition of the area should not obscure the desirability of having a place in the city where one can find nightclubs, bars and other late evening entertainment. Few visitors to Piccadilly Circus in London, to Montmartre in Paris, or to San Francisco's Tenderloin find these areas offensive, despite the adult-oriented nature of permissible commercial land uses. The most important consideration is not what is permitted, but how sensibly it is planned and controlled. The attractiveness of Chippewa Street as an adult entertainment zone will undoubtedly increase as the Convention Center reaches full operation. Also, if proposed casino gambling is introduced into Buffalo, Chippewa Street is one natural location because of its proximity to the Convention Center. Effective law

continued to page 19...

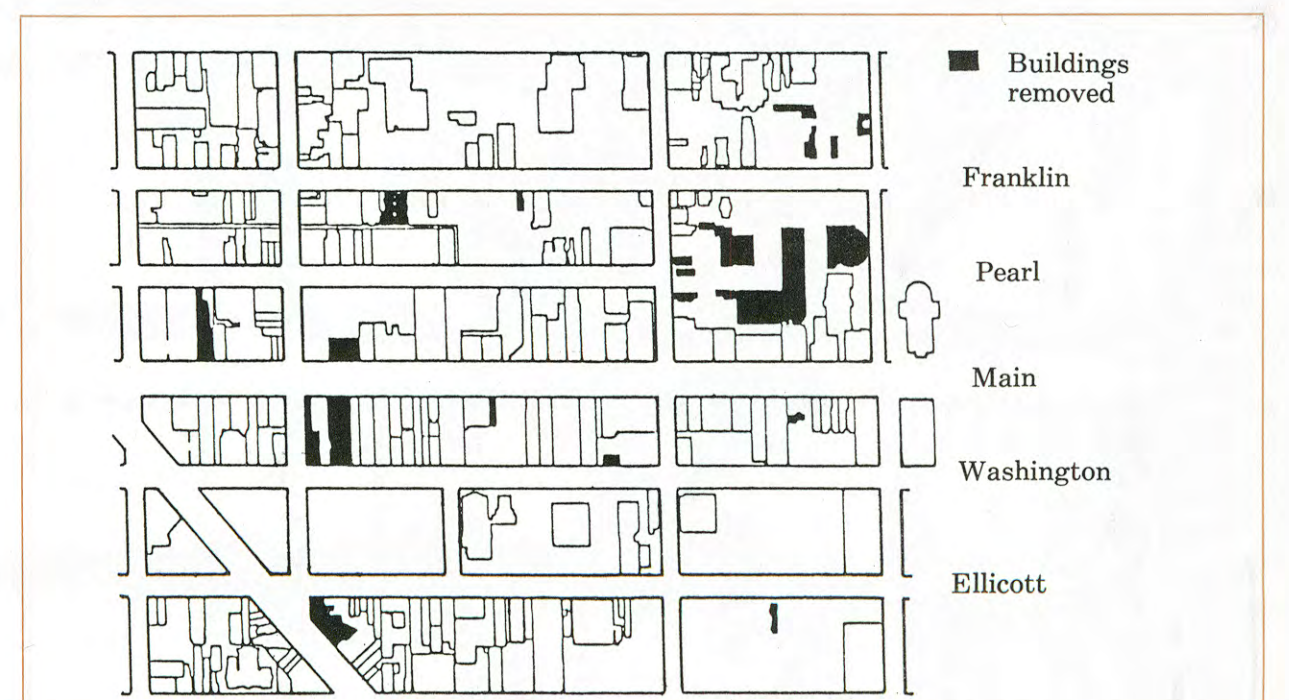


Proposed land use - ground floor

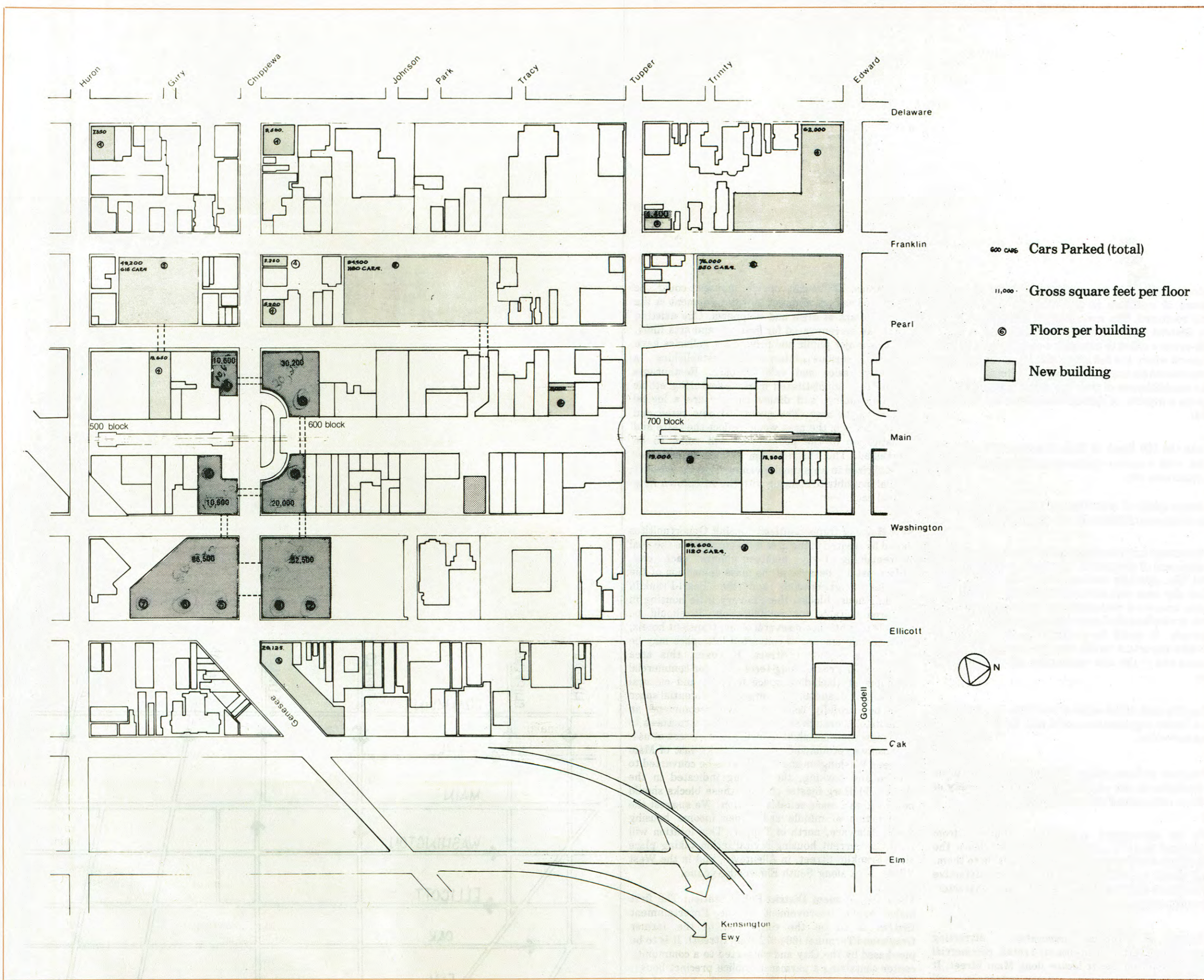


Proposed land use - upper floors

- Buildings removed
- Franklin
- Pearl
- Main
- Washington
- Ellicott



Buildings proposed to be removed or replaced



Proposed quantity of space per building

... continued from page 18

enforcement can eliminate violent crime in the area. The imposition of urban design controls and a facade renovation program will greatly improve its physical environment.

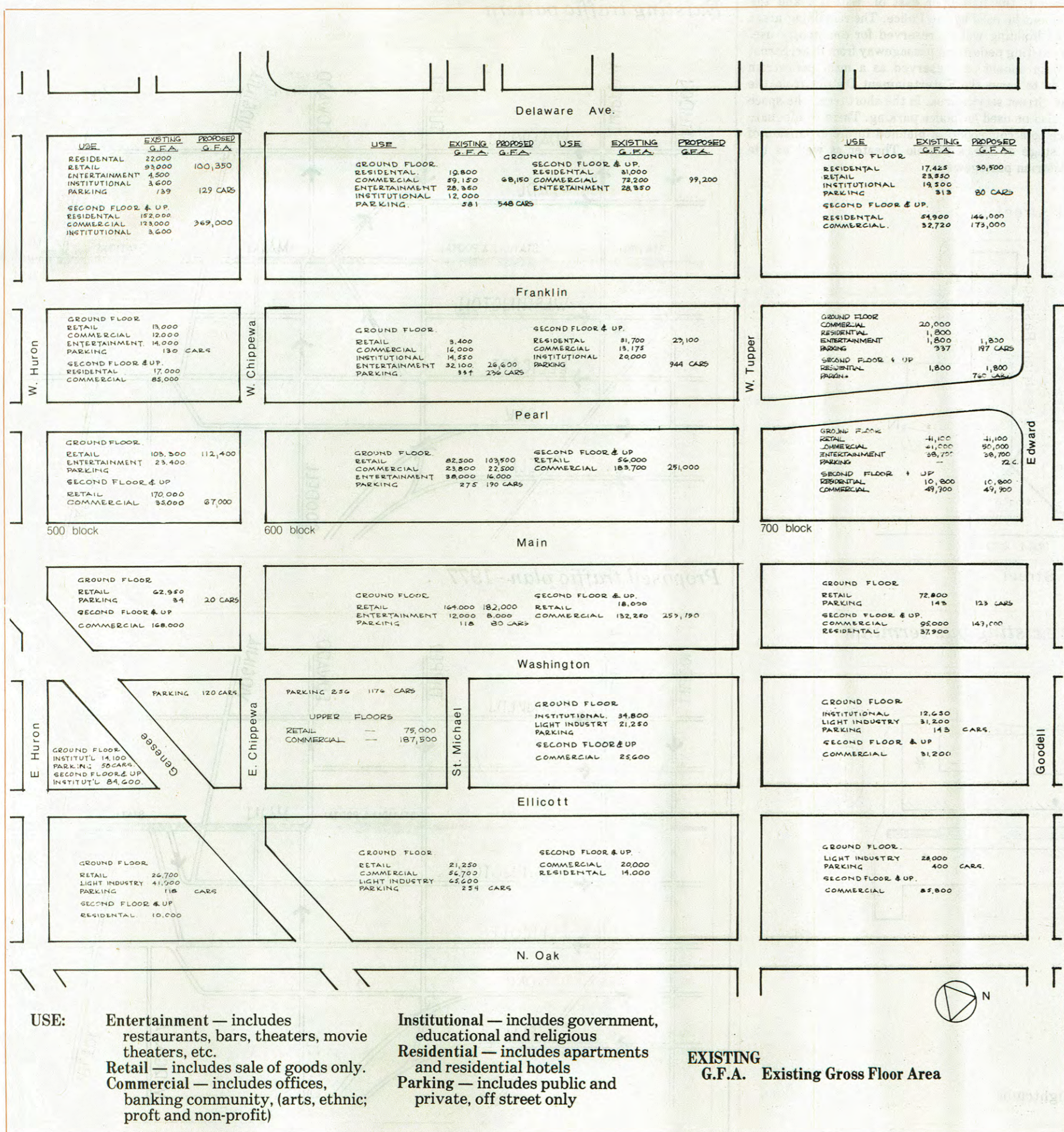
4.) **Transit Station Zones:** The 500 and 700 Blocks will be served directly by rapid transit stations. These will greatly increase the value of adjoining land for new high rise development in the long term. The 700 Block will benefit most. A station closer to the Courier-Express, M. Wile Co. and Trico will very likely increase transit ridership and improve the block's attractiveness for commercial and entertainment uses.

5.) **Service Zones:** When the District is completely revitalized, there will be a great demand for automobile parking, even though the transit system should reduce commuting. Blocks between Franklin and Pearl Streets and between Washington and Oak Streets will in the long term become the sites of new parking structures. These will be linked to the core block and to Delaware Avenue by weather protected, pedestrian walkways, as shown on Page 14.

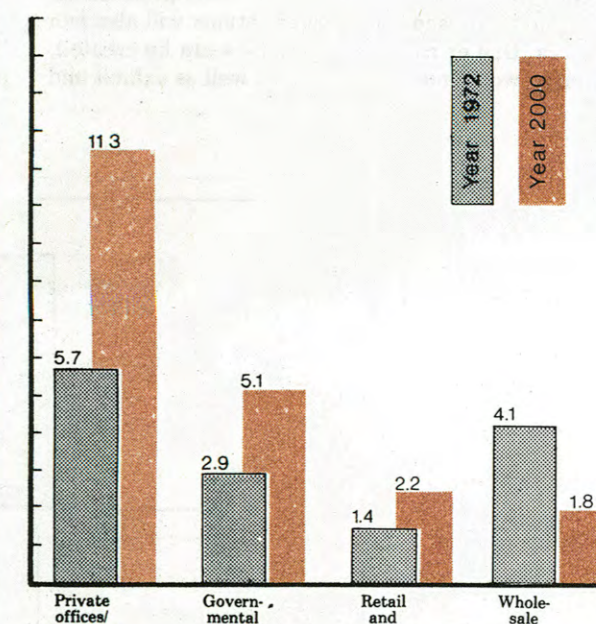
Trends and Projections: While we have not attempted any economic projections for the revitalization of the Entertainment District, we did compare our estimates of proposed new growth to current forecasts of economic growth in the region. The current City Plan estimates that between 1972 and 2000, the Central Business District will require an additional 8.6-million square feet of space (see graph on Page 19.) As Table V on this page, indicates, we propose that roughly sixty percent of this expansion — 5.1 million square feet — occur in the Entertainment District.

In our opinion, this is an entirely reasonable expectation. The area comprises nearly one half of the Central Business District; it is presently largely vacant; and can easily be made ready for reoccupancy. Because of its proximity to the transit system, it should become the prime location for new commercial and retail investment. As the District develops as a major regional cultural center, one can also expect that it will attract a much larger share of entertainment-oriented development than was projected in the City Plan.

However, we do not expect that the sizeable amount of new and rehabilitated space targeted for retail development will be needed for many years, if not decades. The time span required to implement these long-term economic goals must be adjusted to meet demand. We considered, and then rejected, a proposal to encourage light manufacturing along the Elm-Oak Arterial. Industrial uses already there should remain undisturbed, but in the long term new light industrial uses would create too great a demand for parking in an already crowded area, and are generally inappropriate in a city center. Space currently used by industrial firms within the District should be converted to parking and other uses when and if these businesses choose to relocate.



Proposed quantity of space per block existing and proposed buildings.



Projected downtown space needs in millions of square feet

Building Use Categories †	Present Building Use (Gross Floor Area*)					Future Building Use (Gross Floor Area*)				
	Existing		Demolished		Retained		Proposed		Grand Total of Future Uses	
	square feet	% of existing	square feet	% of existing	square feet	% of existing	square feet	% over retained	square feet	% over retained
Commercial	1,450,000	96%	70,000	4%	1,380,000	95%	1,268,000	91%	2,648,000	182%
Retail	951,000	98%	11,000	1%	940,000	98%	400,000	42%	1,340,000	140%
Residential	422,000	96%	16,000	3%	406,000	96%	187,000	46%	593,000	146%
Entertainment	192,000	94%	11,000	5%	181,000	94%	#	#	181,000	94%
Light Industrial	188,000	100%	-0	0%	188,000	100%	-0	0%	188,000	100%
Institutional	181,000	100%	-0	0%	181,000	100%	-0	0%	181,000	100%
Total	3,384,000	96%	108,000	3%	3,276,000	96%	1,855,000	56%	5,131,000	156%

*GFA: Defined in Key to map on page 19.
 †: Defined in Key to map on pages 9 and 19.
 # : Includes space for non-profit arts groups, cultural organizations and existing hotels.
 # : A significant amount of new retail development will include entertainment and cultural uses (such as restaurants, dinner theater, night clubs, bars, etc.).

Table V: proposed economic uses Building floor areas in gross square feet.

Proposed social uses

Introduction: Our principal social goal is to stimulate the development of cultural and entertainment-oriented activities that will enhance the revitalization of the Entertainment District. This goal is an integral and inseparable element of our urban design concept, equal in importance to our suggestions for physical and economic improvements. For nearly a decade, the establishment of an Entertainment District has been a goal of downtown planning. If a successful entertainment district is ever to be created, the City of Buffalo must compete with its suburbs and with other Northeastern and Midwestern cities for a limited pool of investment capital for retail, commercial, and entertainment-oriented capital. The city must also compete with its suburbs for potential residents. Capital for quality retail, commercial, and entertainment-oriented development is likely to come only if Buffalo can demonstrate that it has a greater potential for growth than its suburbs or other cities.

We propose the creation of an **Urban Historic and Cultural Center** as the extra ingredient that will distinguish Buffalo's downtown revitalization program. There are three elements to this social component of our urban design concept: (1) the creation of attractive spaces designed to promote arts, entertainment and cultural activities; (2) a concerted public effort to shift the center of this region's cultural life to downtown Buffalo; and (3) the provision of housing opportunities within or close to the District.

New Space for Cultural Activities: Our physical plan will increase the opportunity for people to meet, move about, relax and be entertained. We propose the creation of the following new and revitalized public spaces:

(1) **Permanent, colorful, all-weather pedestrian arcades**, a Galleria, a revitalized Market Arcade Building, and aerial walkways to and from conveniently located parking. These will encourage people to come downtown in all kinds of weather and to move freely about in the District.

(2) **Theater Square**, a new open-air performance space, mid-block across from Shea's Buffalo Theater. This will become a focal point for the area, a place to rendezvous, to watch free outdoor theater, mime, dance, or similar entertainment.

(3) **Washington Square**, an open-air, landscaped space on Washington Street, linked to the entertainment core through the Market Arcade Building and to the Main Street Mall through a new Galleria. The Square should be adaptable for use as an ice skating rink in winter, and open-air arts, antiques and crafts market in summer. It should be as colorful and exciting as possible, drawing skaters, shoppers and onlookers through the Arcade Building and Galleria into the restaurants and retail shops in newly revitalized buildings surrounding the Square.

(4) **The Main Street Pedestrian Mall** will be specially designed to emphasize the unique flavor of the District. The all-weather arcades along Main Street, modeled on those at Quincy Market in Boston, will encourage outdoor cafes and restaurants. Patrons should have an opportunity to watch other people, the trolleys, the display of lights, the theater marquees and passing artists and performers.

(5) **Entrance Plaza**, situated at Main and Chippewa Streets, will provide a grand entrance to all of Downtown for persons arriving by transit, or by car via the new Elm-Oak arterial. Special drop-off zones are included in the Plaza. Surrounding the Plaza should be new theaters and other entertainment and retail uses.

(6) A limited amount of **public performance and practice space** will be provided at no or low rents in selected City-owned buildings.

The most innovative and exciting feature of the urban historic and cultural center will be the presence of arts organizations and ethnic groups from throughout the city. Our survey (Page 10) indicated that many arts and cultural organizations desired a showplace in the Downtown. Immediate public action must be taken to assure that these groups are not discouraged. As many organizations as possible must be attracted to the 600 Block of Main Street. This will greatly improve the chance of achieving substantial social and economic growth which will benefit the entire city.

If Buffalo is to compete successfully for convention business, it needs something special before potential visitors and tourists will select Western New York over some other city. Like other northeastern and midwestern cities, Buffalo is an ethnic town. It also has a large number and variety of exceptional cultural institutions, museums, the Symphony, fine architecture, and dozens of good amateur and professional art, dance and theater groups. These attractions are not

visible enough to attract the attention of large numbers of outsiders in part because they are so widely scattered. The revitalization of the Entertainment District offers a rare opportunity for a joint public-private effort to establish a special place in the downtown where the full range of local cultural assets are showcased for area residents and visitors.

The establishment of an urban cultural center would generate a number of spin-off benefits to the City. It would:

- Make the 600 Block of Main Street a true cultural center, with a special character perhaps unrivaled in any American city.

- Attract national attention and become a positive force to improve Buffalo's bruised public image.

- Give every neighborhood in the City a stake in the development of downtown. In politics, economics and social life, symbols are extremely important. The center city once was the accepted center of Buffalo's culture because it contained structures and activities which symbolized the hopes and values of a wide range of people. It could be a symbolic center again if activities important to the average person, to ethnic cultures and to the arts community are concentrated there.

- Amplify and enrich cultural activities by creating a place where organizations could mix freely and learn from each other.

- Promote understanding, tolerance and civic pride by displaying in one place the richness and variety of Buffalo's cultural and ethnic heritage.

- Be an educational experience. Children from throughout the city and the region could learn the wide range of cultural opportunities available to them. They would see these presented in an attractive environment which will illustrate the best characteristics of an urban lifestyle.

- Become an economic generator, attracting diversified, entertainment-oriented retail, commercial and service businesses to locate along Main Street. It will also increase tourism, hotel patronage, and downtown retail sales and help support the Convention Center.

- Encourage use of the Rapid Transit System by increasing density around the Huron and Theater Stations, and by increasing evening use of the system.

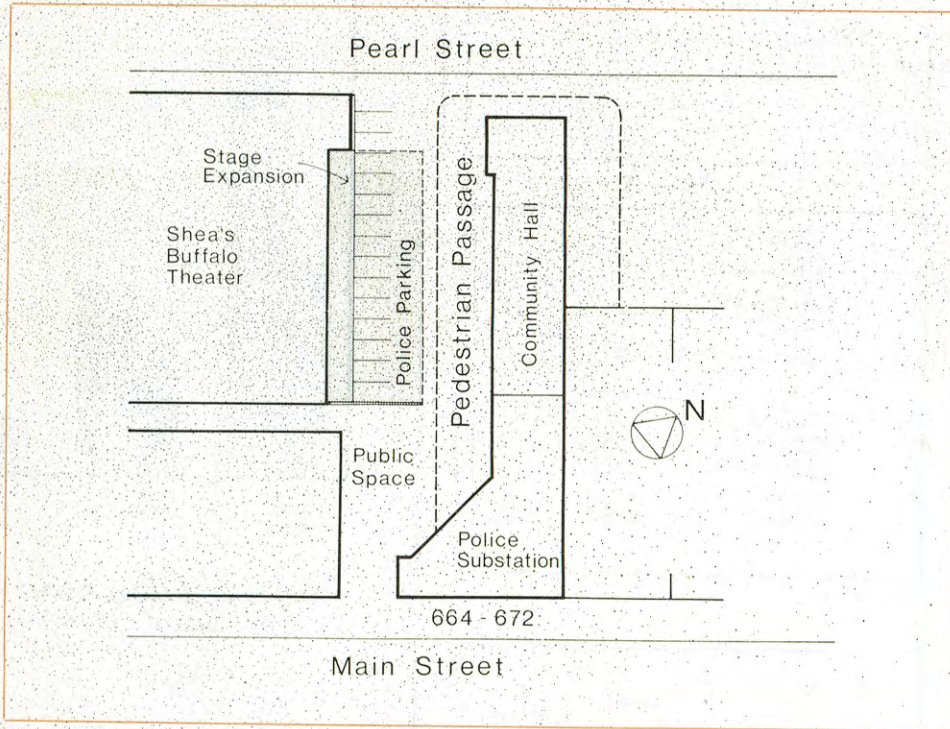
The heart of the Entertainment District already contains three legitimate theaters—Shea's Buffalo, The Studio Arena and the State University's Center for Theater Research. These will be joined by theater departments and troupes from other local educational institutions, including the City of Buffalo public schools. Several professional and semi-professional performing arts and dance organizations will also join the area. One or more ethnic centers can be created, featuring work and office space, as well as exhibit and

sales areas. First-run movie houses could be constructed as part of major new development at the Entrance Plaza at Main and Chippewa. One existing theater can be renovated for first-run and arts films. The city's major public and private art galleries have expressed serious interest in establishing a cooperative sales and exhibit space. Restaurants catering to a sophisticated market, featuring ethnic food, fine dining, and dinner theater are a logical addition to the area. The quality of new retail and specialty sales in the area would reflect the taste and sophistication of the people who will come to be entertained. The District's spirit will be enhanced and publicized in an annual, evening Theater District Festival, possibly to coincide with the Allentown Arts Festival each year.

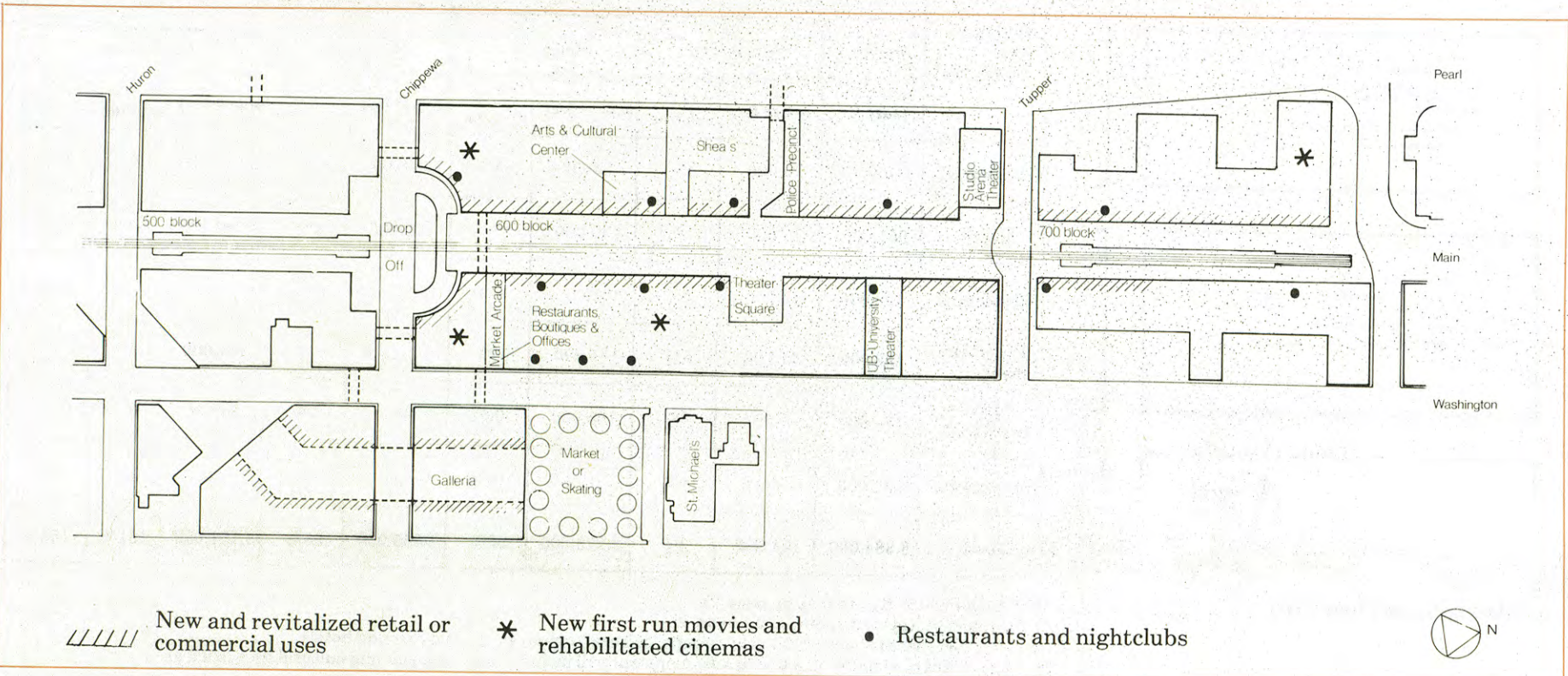
New Housing Opportunities: Housing Opportunities should be created in the area if it is to achieve the goal of remaining lively eighteen hours each day. Unfortunately, because of the mass demolition of the Elm-Oak neighborhoods and the Pearl-Franklin boarding house blocks, there is very little housing in the area suitable for revitalization. It should be possible to rehabilitate several older, transient hotels, and a certain amount of converted loft space may be available along Main Street. However, this area possesses far greater long-term value for commercial development (including space for arts and cultural organizations), and any conversion to residential space must be carefully considered. We recommend an immediate, thorough search of existing structures to determine their suitability for different classes of use. Because we recommend that the blocks east of Main between Washington and Oak Streets be converted to service and parking, the housing indicated in the Wallace-McHarg master plan for these blocks should be moved to a more suitable location. We suggest the construction of middle and upper income housing along Delaware, north of Tupper. This location will reinforce current housing revitalization taking place along Franklin Street, in Allentown, and in the West Village area along South Elmwood Avenue.

The Entertainment District Police Station: The first major public improvement in the Entertainment District is to be the conversion of the former Greyhound Terminal (664-672 Main Street). It is to be purchased by the City and converted to a community center containing a permanent police precinct house. The presence of walking patrols in the heart of the Entertainment District will have an immediate, positive impact on the area's image. The suggestion has already increased investor and developer confidence.

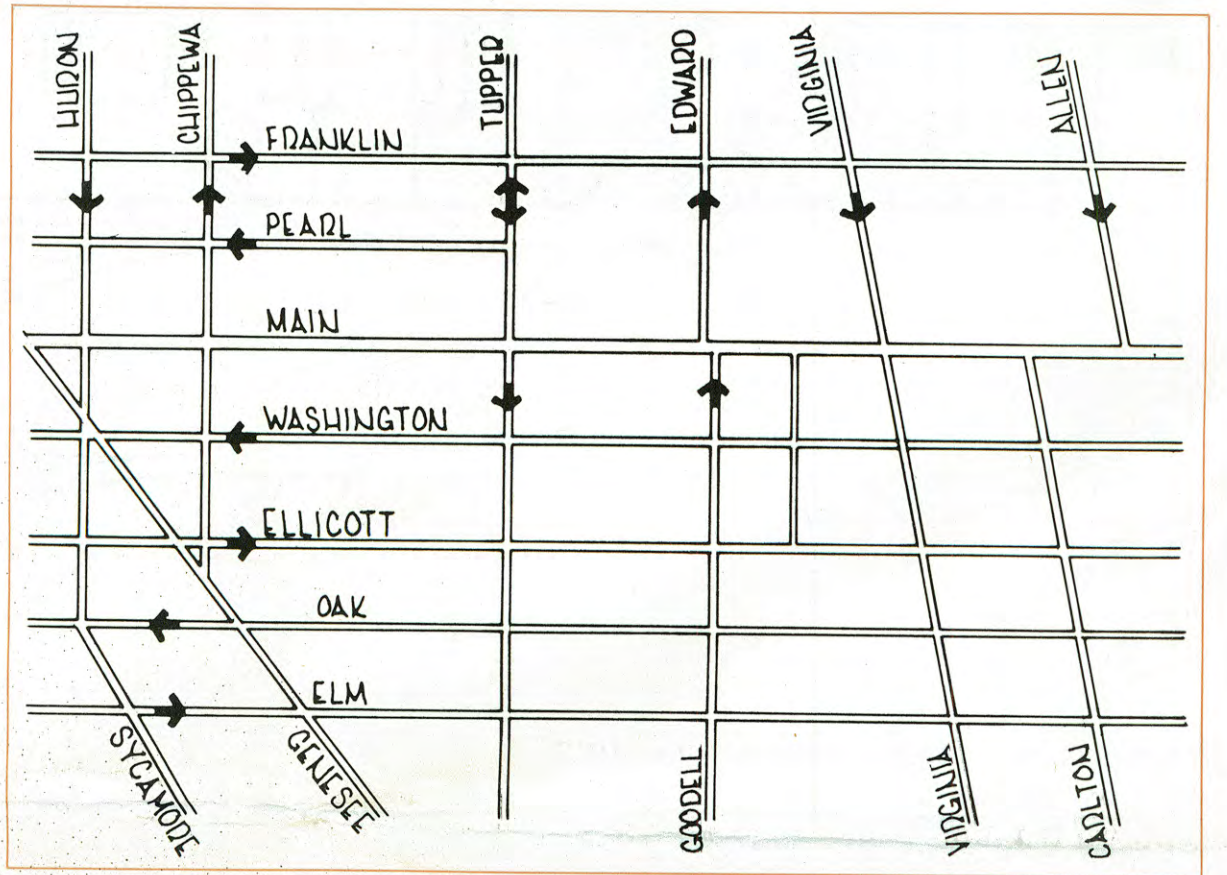
We have recommended to the Commissioner of Police and to the Mayor that the entire second floor at the front, the first floor east of "Gate 1", and the basement be used by the Police. The remaining areas of the building will be reserved for community use. The existing pedestrian passageway from Pearl Street to Main should be preserved as a main pedestrian artery to serve the Entertainment District from the Pearl Street service area. In the short term, the space can also be used for police parking. There is adequate space to accommodate a planned future expansion of the stage of Shea's Buffalo Theater as well as the pedestrian passageway.



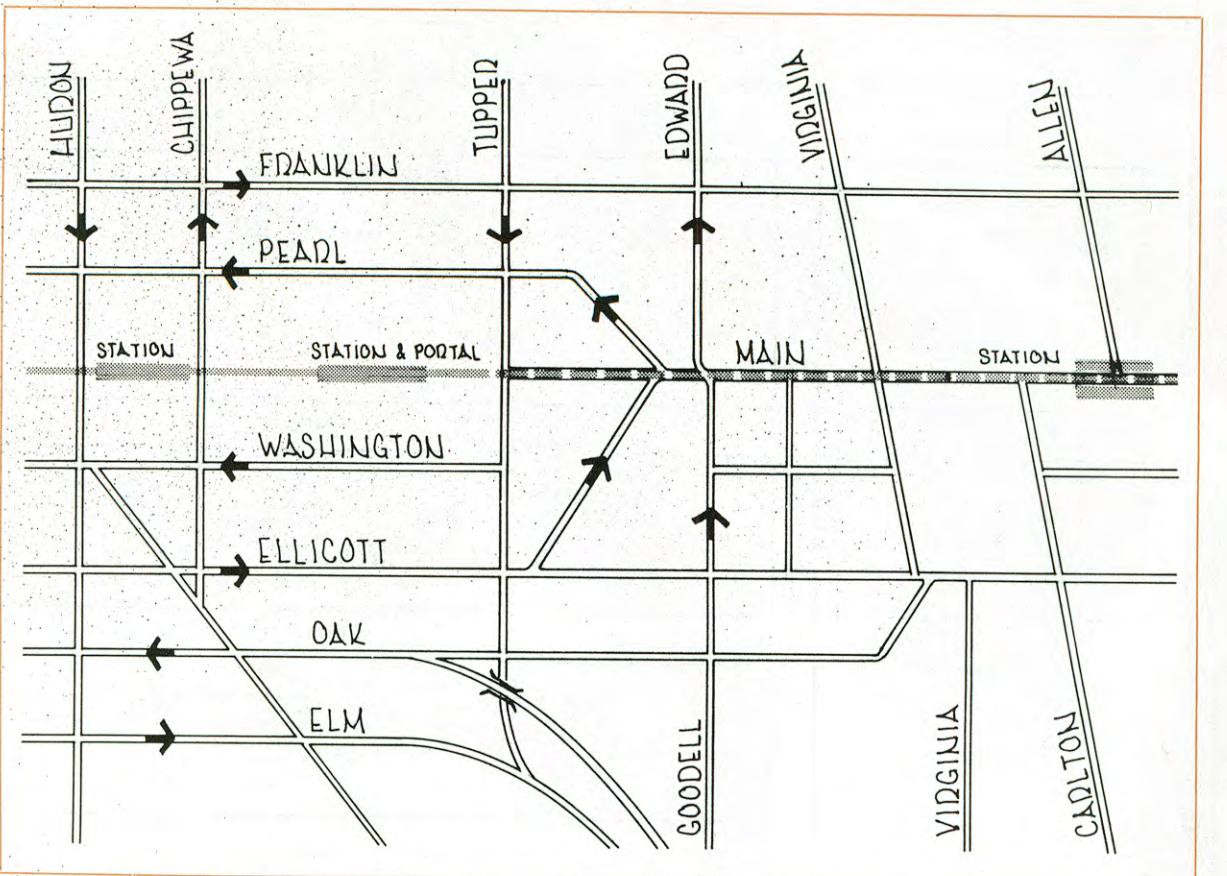
Proposed reuse plan for existing bus terminal



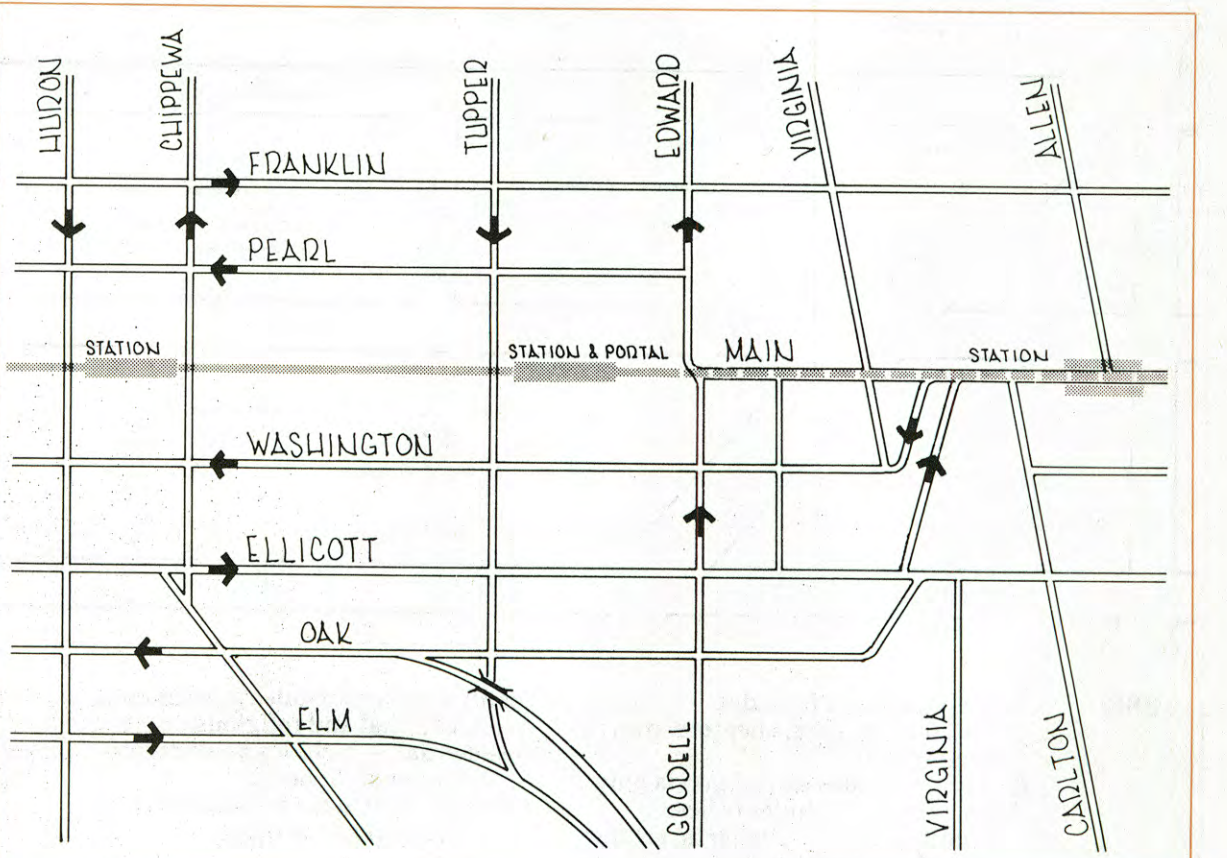
Proposed activities and institutions



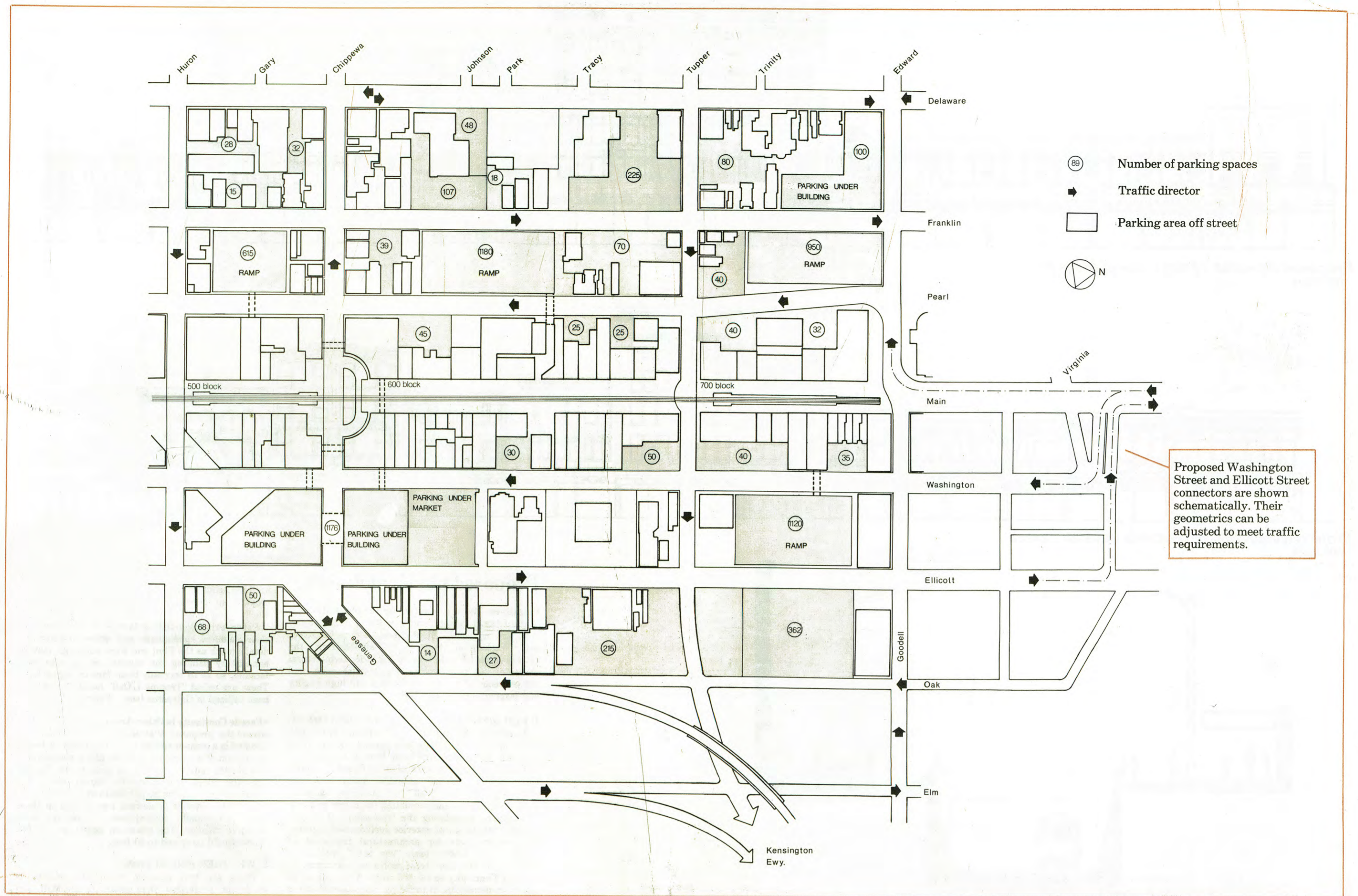
Existing traffic pattern



Proposed traffic plan - 1977



Traffic plan proposed by Entertainment District Project - 1978



Proposed transportation and parking

Proposed transportation

Objectives: Our transportation objectives can be summarized as follows:

1. Pedestrians: Provide convenient access from parking lots into the Main Street Mall, and maximize freedom of movement across the Mall.
2. Rapid Transit: Locate stations so as to maximize their economic impact and support the core of the District.
3. Automobiles: Provide efficient movement into and out of Downtown through the District.
4. Parking: Provide adequate parking in close proximity to the core.

Constraints: The key constraints on a future transportation scheme include:

1. Pedestrians: The train will run at grade on the Main Street Mall, interfering with free cross-street pedestrian flow. This requires selection of special points where pedestrians should cross the tracks.
2. Public Transit: The station between Huron and Chippewa is fixed because of station locations to the south.
3. Automobiles: Traffic direction on existing streets should remain the same for three reasons: (1) the design of exits off the Elm-Oak arterial; retaining existing bus routes serving the rear entrances of major department stores on Washington Street; and (3) required bus circulation patterns around the new NFTA Station on Ellicott Street.
4. Parking: Sites for future parking structures are restricted by existing buildings.

Pedestrians: Our proposed scheme for handling pedestrians is illustrated on Page 14, and has been summarized in the Urban Design Concept on Page 17:

1. To link parking structures (situated in the "service" zones behind Main Street) into the Mall via pedestrian "skyways" and arcades.
2. To provide weather protection on the Mall via canopies and arcades (for details see Page 22).
3. To free up the 600 Block of Main Street for pedestrians by shifting the proposed Theater transit station and portal from south of Tupper Street, (where it would extend from the new Studio Arena to She's — fully two thirds of the "Core" Block) to a position north of Tupper Street.

Public Transit: Our proposed scheme for handling the rail rapid transit system is to shift the Theater Station and the portal to a position between Tupper and Edward Streets. This proposal has several positive effects:

1. It frees up the "heart" of the District (the 600 Block) to pedestrian flow across the Mall, between the theaters and restaurants.
2. It provides a "gateway"—both symbolic and real—at the north end of the core block to match the Entrance Plaza and Huron Station at the south end.
3. It changes the 700 Block, which has many fine buildings on it, from a site proposed for demolition and replacement with new highway intersections (described on Page 7), into an extension of the Mall having its own station. This will make Loew's Teck theater a meaningful part of the Entertainment District.
4. It increases the economic impact of the Theater Station: the site south of Tupper Street would place it in competition with the Huron Station. Moving it north of Tupper will provide better service to the intervening zone between Tupper and the next station at Allen Street (see the small maps on page 20).

5. It places the theater station closer to the large industrial and office buildings on Goodell Street—the Courier-Express, the Sidway Building, M. Weil Company, Trico and others—making the rapid transit a more attractive way for their employees to commute.

6. Finally, it saves NFTA a reported \$2-million in construction costs, by eliminating the underground section of transit line through the 700 Block. Technically, there is adequate space for the station and portal within the 700 block. If necessary, the incline of the tracks can be reduced by slightly raising the street level of Main at Edward, or lowering it at Tupper. This can be easily accomplished because Main Street at this point is to be excavated for the "cut-and-cover" section of the transit tunnel.

Our proposed location of the station will mean an additional grade crossing for the train at Tupper Street, which we anticipate can be handled through electronic timing of traffic signals—as at all other grade crossings on the system.

Automobiles: One proposed scheme for handling automobile traffic should provide for efficient movement of traffic around the Mall, and into the downtown commercial and government zones.

1. South-Bound Traffic: The NFTA's proposal to close Lower Main Street to automobiles will require that south-bound traffic be diverted to Pearl and Washington Streets. Previous proposals suggest the demolition of buildings on the 700 Block in order to provide new connectors to these streets. Because we propose to locate Theater Station in this block, it is necessary to divert traffic away from the Mall at Edward or north of Edward. Our urban design scheme diverts south-bound traffic into a major flow down a new Pearl Street Connector, and a secondary flow down a new Washington Street Connector.

The Pearl Street Connector: The connection from Main to Pearl is proposed by means of: (1) Widening Edward Street on the south side to four lanes as far as Delaware Avenue. This will require the demolition of a portion of a one story commercial structure on Main Street and a residence on Edward Street, and minor cutting of the grass corner of St. Louis Church; and (2) extending Pearl Street north to Edward Street—requiring the demolition of miscellaneous sheds (mostly abandoned), one part of a collision shop, and the abandoned Grosvenor Library stack building (discussed previously on Page 16).

It is possible that detailed engineering studies may show that the corners of our proposed four-lane Pearl Street connector are too tight. If this is so, it may be necessary to demolish the rear of the Teck Theater. While this would be undesirable, it is better to lose the Teck than to run the connector through the middle of the 700 Block.

The Washington Street Connector: Our proposed connection from Main to Washington would consist of a new left-hand turn lane on Main to a new street located immediately north of Virginia Street. (The Roosevelt Apartments and the former NFTA Offices are to be demolished by the City in any case.)

2. North-Bound Traffic: In our proposal, traffic moving north would continue to travel via Franklin and Ellicott Streets. Franklin needs no improvements in the District. We propose that Ellicott be linked to Main Street via a new connector located just north of Virginia Street, parallel to the Washington Connector. These two connecting streets can be constructed without disturbing housing proposed or under construction in the Ellicott Urban Renewal Area.

3. East-Bound Traffic: This would continue to be handled via Tupper and Huron streets, with few improvements necessary.

4. West-Bound Traffic: This would pass through the District at (1) Goodell-Edward Streets—requiring the widening of Edward to four lanes from Main to Delaware; and (2) at Genesee-Chippewa Streets. Present construction of the Kensington Expressway off-ramps will make Genesee-Chippewa the major entrance into Downtown Buffalo. Genesee Street can be closed between Ellicott and Main Streets without harming Downtown traffic flow.

Parking: Our objective is to provide adequate parking on sites close to Downtown destination points, taking into account the expected reduction in demand caused by the operation of the rapid transit system. The continued need for parking structures is a major element of our proposed urban design scheme.

We are interested in two facts concerning the proposed parking facilities in the District:

1. How many parking spaces are required by proposed uses in the District; and
2. How many parking ramps are required and where they should be located.

I. Parking Spaces Required: Our calculations of future parking needs employ the same formulae we used to estimate existing demand (see Page 11). We did, however, adjust the ratios to take into account an

expected increase in public transit ridership by downtown workers. At present, the NFTA estimates that 25 per cent of all trips downtown are by public transit (bus). In the future, as many as 41 per cent of those coming Downtown could arrive by rapid transit and by bus, according to NFTA. Our adjusted parking ratios are as follows:

Table VI: Parking Ratios
[Adjusted for Rapid Transit]

Building Use	Minimum Parking Spaces Required
Commercial	2.0 per 1000 gross square feet
Retail	2.5 per 1000 gross square feet
Residential	0.6 per 1000 gross square feet
Industrial	1.5 per 1000 gross square feet
Entertainment	
Restaurants, etc.	Evening patrons use same parking as daytime commercial. Daytime customers are included in commercial parking.

In order to manage increased traffic flow caused by the closing of Main Street and increased building occupancy in the District, it will be necessary to restrict on-street parking and loading. It is proposed that on-street parking be restricted to one side only of all streets in the District, except Delaware, which would retain parking on both sides. This reduces the

amount of on-street parking from 870 existing spaces to 435 spaces.

As shown in Table VII - on this page, our calculations indicate that total demand for parking in the fully revitalized District will amount to approximately 7,500 spaces. Of these, 3,327 existing spaces would be retained. Therefore, approximately 4,200 new spaces must be provided as the development program proceeds.

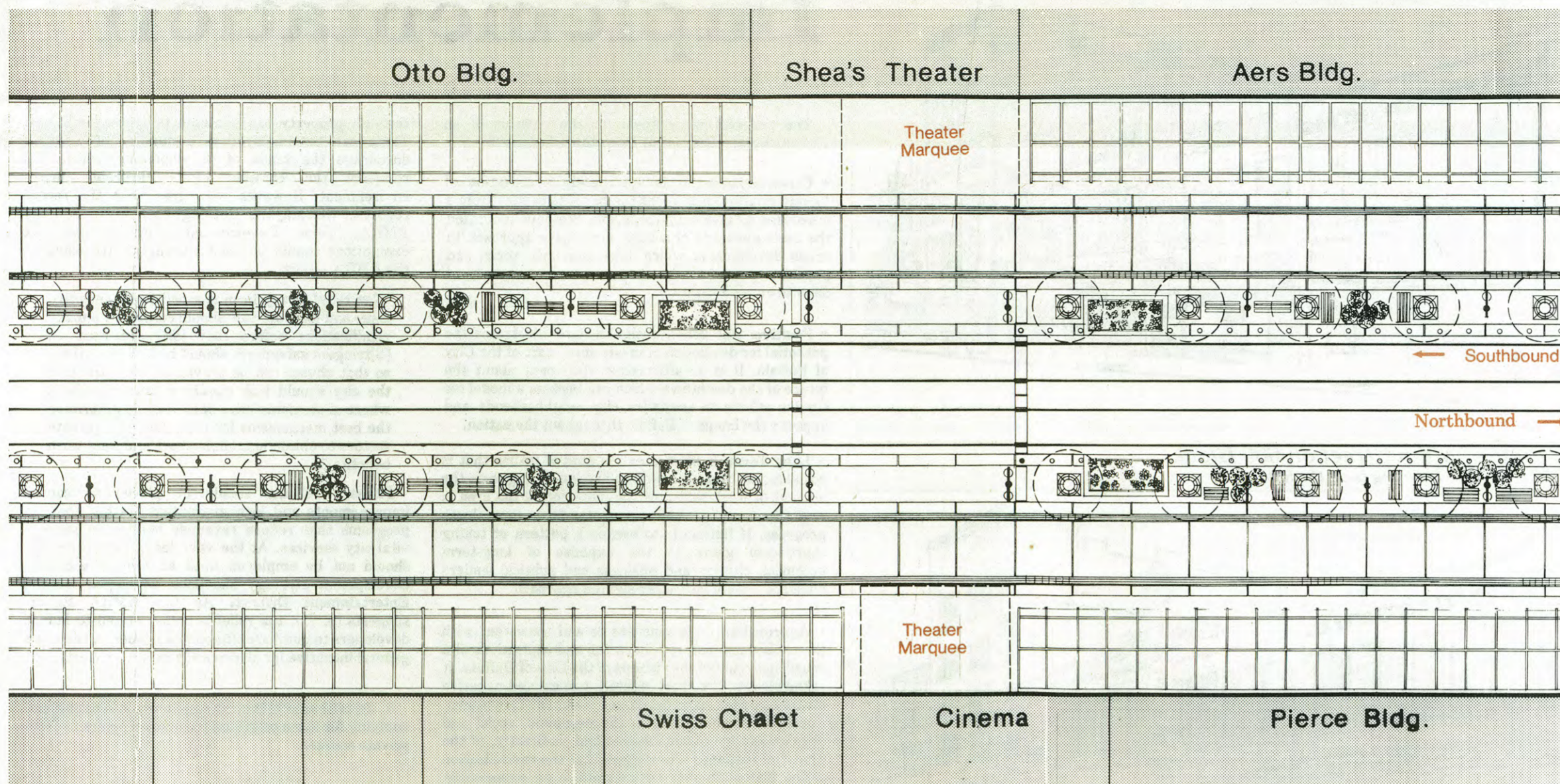
II. New Parking Ramps: It is proposed that the majority of the 4,200 new spaces be provided in four new parking structures of five levels each, and in 2-3 levels of parking under the proposed Washington Square development. The locations of the four parking structures are indicated on the map on this page—all are in the "service zones" in the blocks to either side of Main Street. Three have access off Pearl Street to Main. The fourth is on Washington Street north of Tupper.

It should be noted that the 672 "spillover" cars identified on Page 11 are not included in the estimated total of 7,500 proposed parking spaces needed in the District. These spillover cars could be handled in various ways: by providing parking structures elsewhere (nearer their destinations); by increasing the height or size of the proposed ramps; or by adding a new ramp over the Ellicott Station Post Office on Washington Street south of Tupper.

Use †	Building Space: Gross Floor Area in sf				Parking Ratio (spaces/1000 sf)	Parking spaces required by retained & new buildings
	Retained	Proposed	Total	80% Total * x		
Commercial	1,380,000	1,268,000	2,648,000	2,118,000	2.0	4,235 spaces
Retail	940,000	400,000	1,340,000	1,071,000	2.5	2,678 spaces
Residential	406,000	187,000	593,000	NA	0.6	356 spaces
Light Industrial	188,000	(none)	188,000	NA	1.5	282 spaces
Retained Parking	Off-street		2,892 spaces retained			7,551 spaces required
	On-street		435 spaces retained			
	Total		3,327 spaces retained			
New Parking		4,224 spaces proposed				
Retained + New		7,551 spaces total				

*: The Gross Floor Area (GFA) of commercial and retail space is reduced to 80% of the total, to allow for the lower intensity of occupancy expected in these categories within the district.
†: Definitions of each use category are given in the Key to the Land Use maps on pages 8 and 18

Table VII: Proposed parking within District



Proposed details of Main Street Mall
Surface treatment



Main Street at night - 1940

Courtesy Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society - Fitzgerald collection

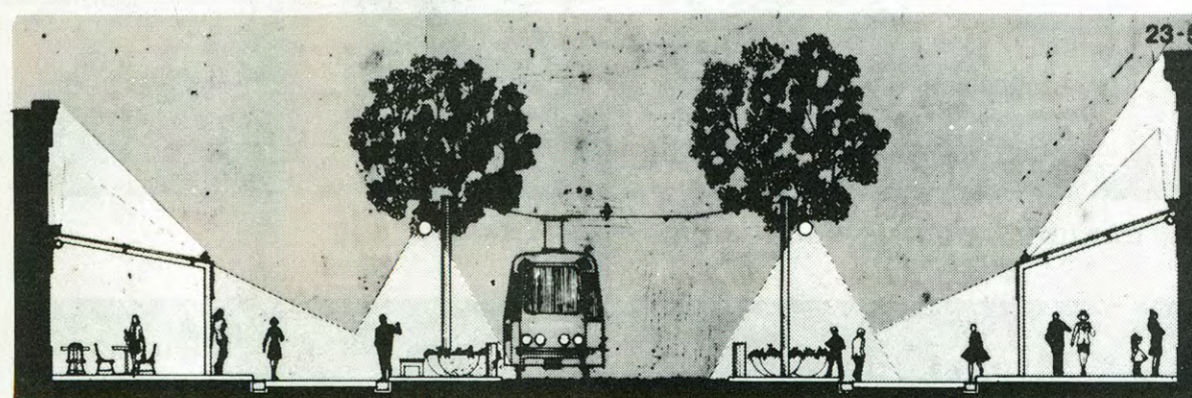


Trompe L'Oeil facades in the Strand, Galveston, Texas
Painted in 1976 to suggest missing cast iron decoration. (left to right: painted, painted, and real)

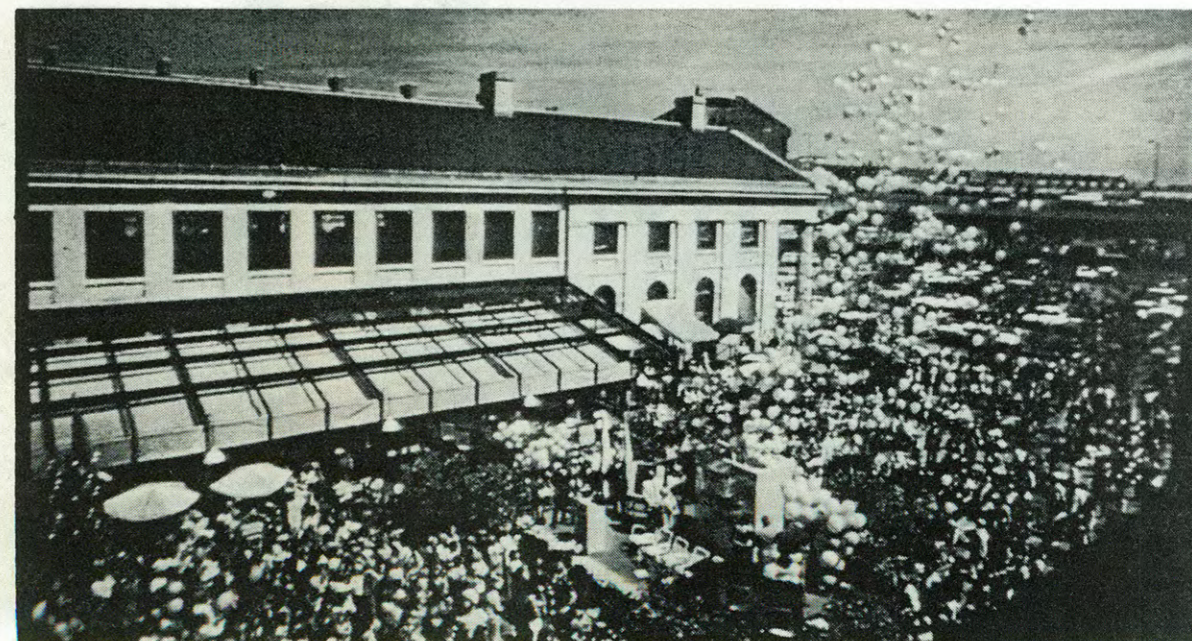


Quincy Market in Boston - 1977 — inside
Showing revitalization using canopies.

Courtesy Benjamin Thompson & Associates



Proposed section through 600 block of Main Street at night



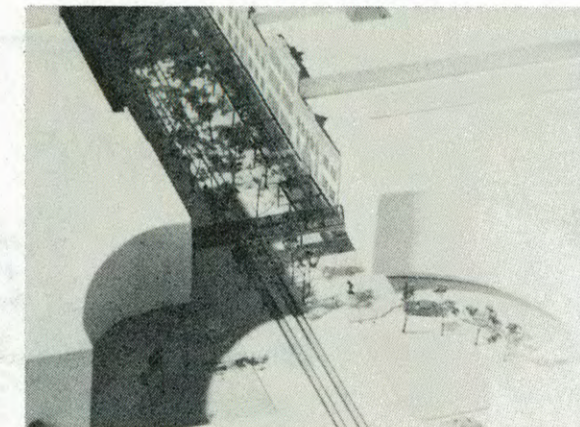
Quincy Market — outside

Courtesy Benjamin Thompson & Associates



Example of proposed facade lighting
On the 600 block of Main Street

Joseph N. Kellas,
Niagara Mohawk
Power Corporation



Detail model photo of proposed "Entrance Plaza" to Mall
On 600 block of Main Street, just north of Chippewa Street - looking north.

• **Arcades:** Canopies cannot be used for weather protection along the Mall on the 500 Block and areas south. They take up 15 feet or more of the sidewalk and cannot be located next to transit stations which fill much of the street.

The proposed solution is to set back the facades of the retail stores on these areas of Main Street, so as to create first floor arcades facing the street. The arcades will provide additional pedestrian areas in the congested downtown. Arcades should be provided in all new and renovated buildings, including those at the Chippewa intersection.

However, it has been suggested that every one of the NFTA's large surface structures may be entirely eliminated if a fare-free zone is declared throughout the Downtown sector of the rapid transit system. It will then not be necessary to construct the large raised platforms, ramps for wheelchairs, steps and ticket booths that dominate the middle of Main Street. If this can be done without making the system inaccessible to the handicapped, the canopy system we suggest for the 600 Block can be extended along the entire length of the Downtown Mall, where appropriate. The canopies can then be designed to serve partly as station waiting areas, extending at points out into the street where the train stops. In this case, the NFTA should assume a major portion of the costs of the construction of the canopies.

• **Awnings:** The 700 Block of Main Street, Chippewa Street and buildings surrounding Washington Square, are best suited to awnings on individual buildings. These awnings, unlike those under the permanent canopies on the 600 Block, should be designed for all-weather exterior use.

3. LANDSCAPE:

The treatment of the surface of the pedestrian Mall is constrained by the engineering requirements of the rapid transit system, especially the tracks in the center of the Mall. Because of this constraint, we suggest that crossings for pedestrians be limited to strategic points opposite significant activities, as shown on Page 14. These crossings should be clearly indicated by special paving.

Linear movement is shown in the detailed Mall plan above. The Mall is divided into four zones: (1) the central, linear zone for two train tracks; (2) a linear, landscaped seating and buffer zone on each side of the tracks which can be also used for snow storage in the winter; (3) two linear, emergency service lanes on either side of the tracks which can also be used as movement space by pedestrians and bicyclists; and (4) linear zones for "pedestrians only" protected by canopies attached to the buildings. Each zone should have its own paving material. We suggest a rough surface texture in the central zones beside the tracks to discourage pedestrians. Brick and stone or concrete can be used in other zones to make attractive patterns, or to distinguish different types of activities.

Street furniture should include comfortable seating and tables (possibly to be moved in winter), bicycle racks and bollards beside the tracks. It is not commonly realized that trees existed along this part of Main Street in the early 1900's. They can again serve an important function by providing shade in summer, as well as buffers to the train. We suggest that trees be planted on the 600 Block (and possibly on other blocks between the stations). They should be fairly finely textured so as to provide adequate shade in summer.

Landscaping should also be provided in other areas of the District, as indicated on Page 14.

4. LIGHTING

Lighting for the 600 block on the Mall should be in character with entertainment and historical themes. It should be decorative in appearance and scaled to the pedestrian.

Special zones of lighting can be identified. The buildings themselves can be illuminated so as to pronounce their architectural details—turning the street itself into "theater." The pedestrian area adjacent to the buildings should be brightly illuminated, with most light emanating from the store windows and from small lighting fixtures attached under the canopies. The central zone of the street can be illuminated from low decorative fixtures under the trees, or by up-lighting the trees themselves. Parking areas behind Main Street, as well as the pedestrian walkways into the Mall, should be brightly illuminated, possibly from high mast lights.

5. SIGNAGE:

It is critical that signage be controlled in the district, particularly on the Mall. Much existing signage is automobile-oriented and presents a visual clutter. We suggest that signs on the 600 Block be limited to horizontal signs for each store on the facade of the canopies, plus small hanging signs for shops under the canopies. Large vertical signs would be limited to use above the marquees of theaters.

In addition, a special sign to announce the entrance to the District should be constructed. This can be attached to the pedestrian skyway across Main Street just north of the proposed Entrance Plaza at Chippewa Street. This would, in effect, transform the skyway into a large, but light and decorative marquee, announcing activities and reinforcing the special character of the 600 Block.



*East side of Main Street
600 block - looking north.*



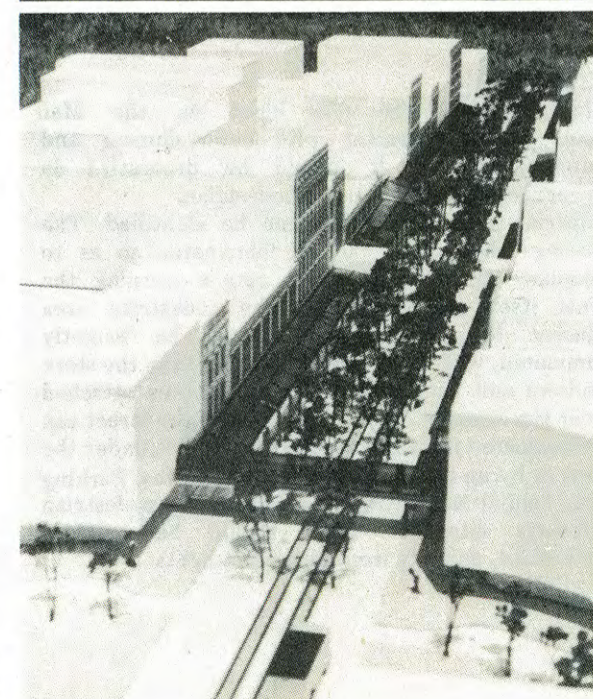
*West side of Main Street
500 block*



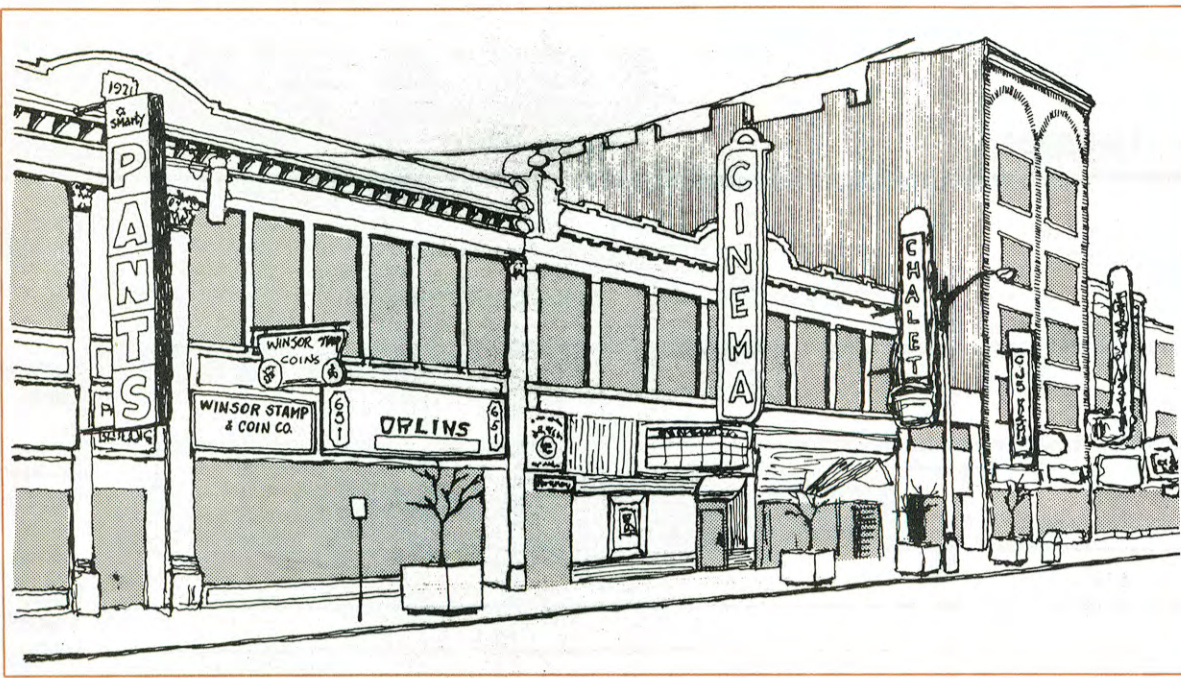
*West side of Main Street
600 block - south end*



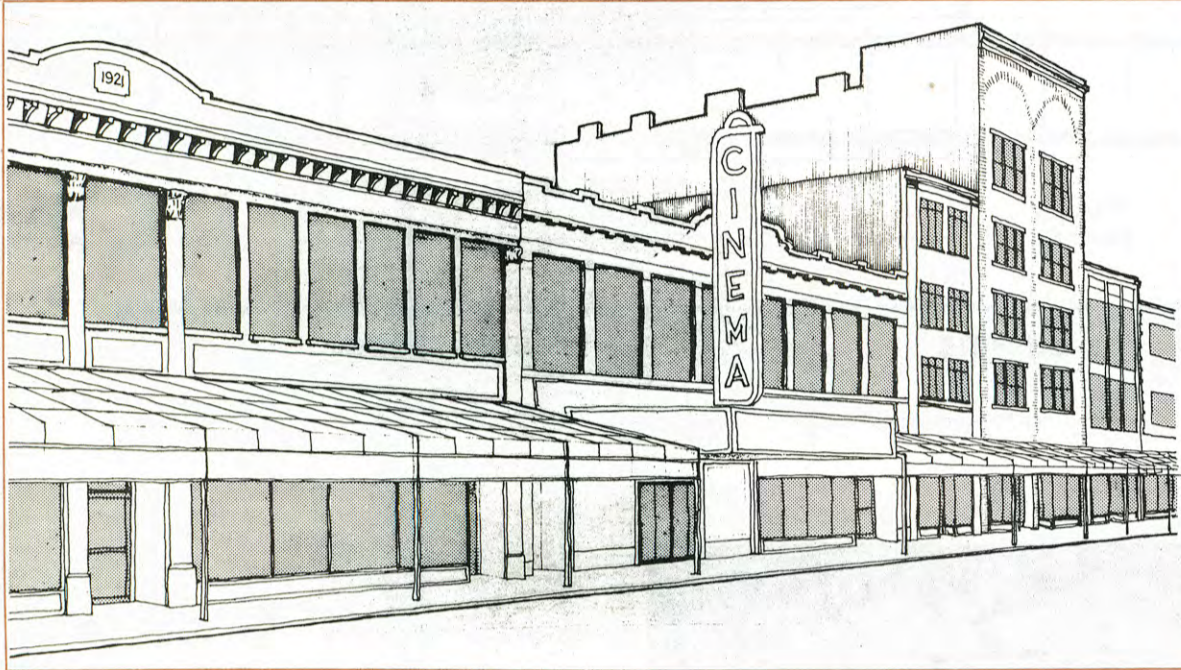
*West side of Main Street
600 block - north end*



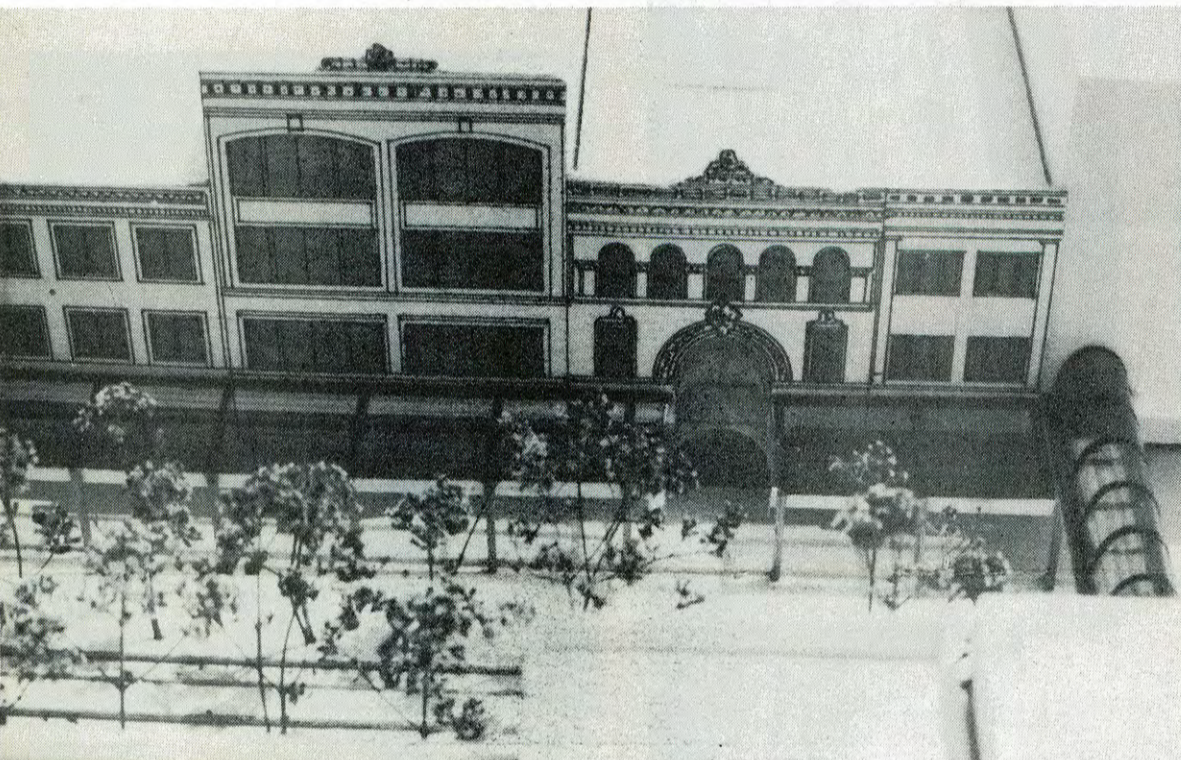
*View of model looking north
Showing proposed entrance plaza and mall*



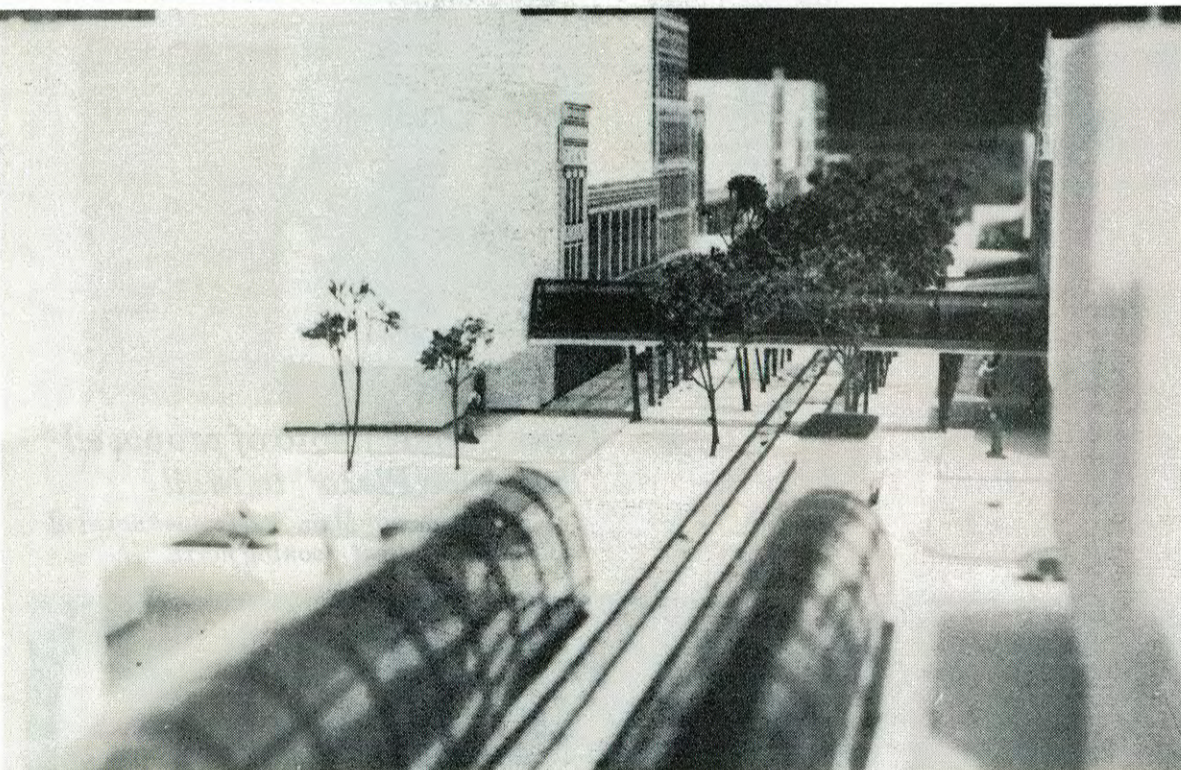
*Existing view of Main Street on 600 Block
Looking east - Pierce Building is on the left*



*Proposed view of Main Street on 600 Block
Looking east - showing facades and signs cleaned up; canopies added to fronts.*



*View of model showing east side of Main Street
Including the Market Arcade*



*View of model looking north along Main Street
Huron Station in foreground*



*View of model looking south along Main Street
New Studio Arena marquee in right foreground*

Implementation

The program we suggest for the creation of an Entertainment District in Downtown Buffalo is:

• Comprehensive: It is not merely a collection of loosely related ideas about the benefits to flow from a government "giveaway" program. We have identified the basic elements of a bold, innovative approach to urban development which links economic, social and physical programs to increase the chances of downtown revitalization.

• Positive: Our urban design scheme illustrates the potential for development in one small part of the City of Buffalo. It is an affirmative statement about the future of the downtown which can become a model for similar efforts to revitalize city neighborhoods and improve the image of Buffalo throughout the nation.

• Long-Term: It illustrates the kind of future that is possible, not what is bound to happen. It suggests the amount of work that must be done before the area is revitalized, and provides some standards to evaluate progress. If Buffalo is to escape a pattern of taking short-term gains at the expense of long-term potential, citizens and business and political leaders must soon adopt such a far-sighted approach.

• Appropriate: It is sensitive to and consistent with the traditions, history, character and aspirations of a broad spectrum of the citizens of the City of Buffalo. It acknowledges the short-sighted, cynical and negative attitudes people have developed about the Downtown. These have contributed to the economic, social and physical decline of the District and, indirectly, of the City. Our response is to suggest that the revitalization of the Entertainment District offers an opportunity for a wide range of interests to have a direct stake in the rebirth of the city center. The shift of arts, theater, educational and cultural activities to the District should therefore be an integral part of any long-range development plan.

• Accomplishable: If sufficient resources, community support and public-private cooperation can be mobilized quickly, the Entertainment District will become a reality. In recent years, there has been significant criticism of the lack of initiative by civic leaders to solve Buffalo's problems. In comparison to such "renaissance" cities as Pittsburgh, Detroit, Baltimore and cities throughout the "Sun Belt," Buffalo's business community has been especially reluctant to contribute funds and individual effort. Limited public resources have often been wasted because of a lack of clear goals, unwieldy and inefficient bureaucracy, poor business practices, splintered decision-making and short-sightedness. Our impression, however, is that both Buffalo's business and political leaders are now prepared to reverse the drift and decline that have characterized the last decade.

What is required, we think, is a public-private cooperative effort that will restore the credibility of the City's urban revitalization efforts and increase the confidence of potential investors throughout the state and the nation that Buffalo is seriously trying to solve its problems. Elected officials have assumed and will continue to play a leadership role in this effort, but they will need the active participation of business, arts and neighborhood organizations!

To overcome cynicism and inertia, the City must be prepared to use the full range of tools (both incentives and controls) at its disposal to achieve desirable economic, social and physical development goals. These tools must be employed intelligently and efficiently in a way that offers the best chance of maximizing the benefits from limited resources. Clear priorities must be established that neither waste resources, nor stimulate development that outstrips demand. In our opinion, these goals can only be achieved if a full-time, professional management system is established. Each of these points is discussed in greater detail below.

INCENTIVES

The principal approach to encourage private investors to participate in the development process should be through the judicious use of positive "incentives." We interpret the term "incentives" broadly and do not limit it solely to monetary rewards. Non-profit arts and cultural organizations, for instance, will play an integral role in creating a desirable character for the District. These groups can be accommodated by providing a reasonable amount of low- and no-rent space in publicly-owned buildings. They should be encouraged to contribute labor and talent as "sweat equity" in improving their facilities. The City can provide the paint and other materials and technical advice.

The primary goal, however, must be to identify and to interest private developers in redeveloping the area. They will be primarily interested in the availability of direct and indirect economic incentives before they assume the risks of investment. We have not tried to catalogue every available program which could be a source of funds. We merely indicate the kinds of incentives that are possible. The project management system must survey all available incentives, tailoring them to the particular needs of potential investors. This assumes that there is agreement on the long-term goals and priorities of the Entertainment District Project. Without such agreement, it is likely that public resources will be wasted.

An economic incentives strategy should be developed from the following kinds of programs:

- 1. Direct Public Aid.** Public capital can be used for necessary physical improvements and to establish financial assistance programs (such as interest subsidies and loan guarantees). Public improvements will increase the overall attractiveness of the area to investors, directly increase property values, and improve the equity positions of landowners. Financial assistance programs should be used to reduce the initial risk which currently deters investment in the District. Physical improvements completed or contemplated include the construction of the Convention Center, a half-billion-dollar rapid transit system, the conversion of Main Street into a pedestrian mall, and the rehabilitation of Shea's Buffalo, the Studio Arena and the University Theaters, as well as community performing arts spaces. We suggest the additional construction of attractive public spaces within the District (Theater Square; covered arcades; Washington Square; and new parking structures). Public funds must also be used for uniform facade renovation work throughout the district.

- 2. Creating financial incentives for private investment in renovation and new construction.** The principal technique available to local government is

through property tax abatements and exemptions. These can be employed in a number of ways to encourage the kinds of developments which will reinforce the creation of a desirable urban environment. However, we agree with the recent report of the Mayor's Housing Task Force and the AMRA "Joint Development" report that tax exemptions should be used sparingly. According to the AMRA report:

"Tax relief in any form is a politically sensitive issue and local officials should consider its many ramifications before they [sic] are used ... [S]tringent safeguards should be built into them so that abuses can be prevented. In particular the city should look closely at other projects where abatements have been used to determine the best mechanisms for the public and private sectors to obtain maximum short and long term benefits."

Primary reliance should be placed on capital improvements and loan guarantees, rather than on programs that reduce revenues needed to support vital city services. At the very least, tax incentives should not be employed until an overall economic development strategy has been developed for the Entertainment District. As the AMRA Report suggests (p. 72), tax relief is better suited to induce developers to purchase city-owned property, than as a general incentive for all privately owned property.

- 3. Provision of technical assistance** in locating and applying for loans or grants from government or from private sources.

- 4. Reduced rentals and limited land sale discounts** on publicly owned property to achieve desirable project objectives. Like tax abatements, this incentive should be used sparingly as part of a general economic development strategy in which immediate lost revenues are outweighed by the prospect of greater long-term gains. This technique should not be used unless the public can be assured that adequate safeguards have been taken to avoid abuse. When lower than market price sale and lease agreements are employed, the public should expect to receive a greater long-term return from development profit than it might reasonably expect from the use of other incentive programs.

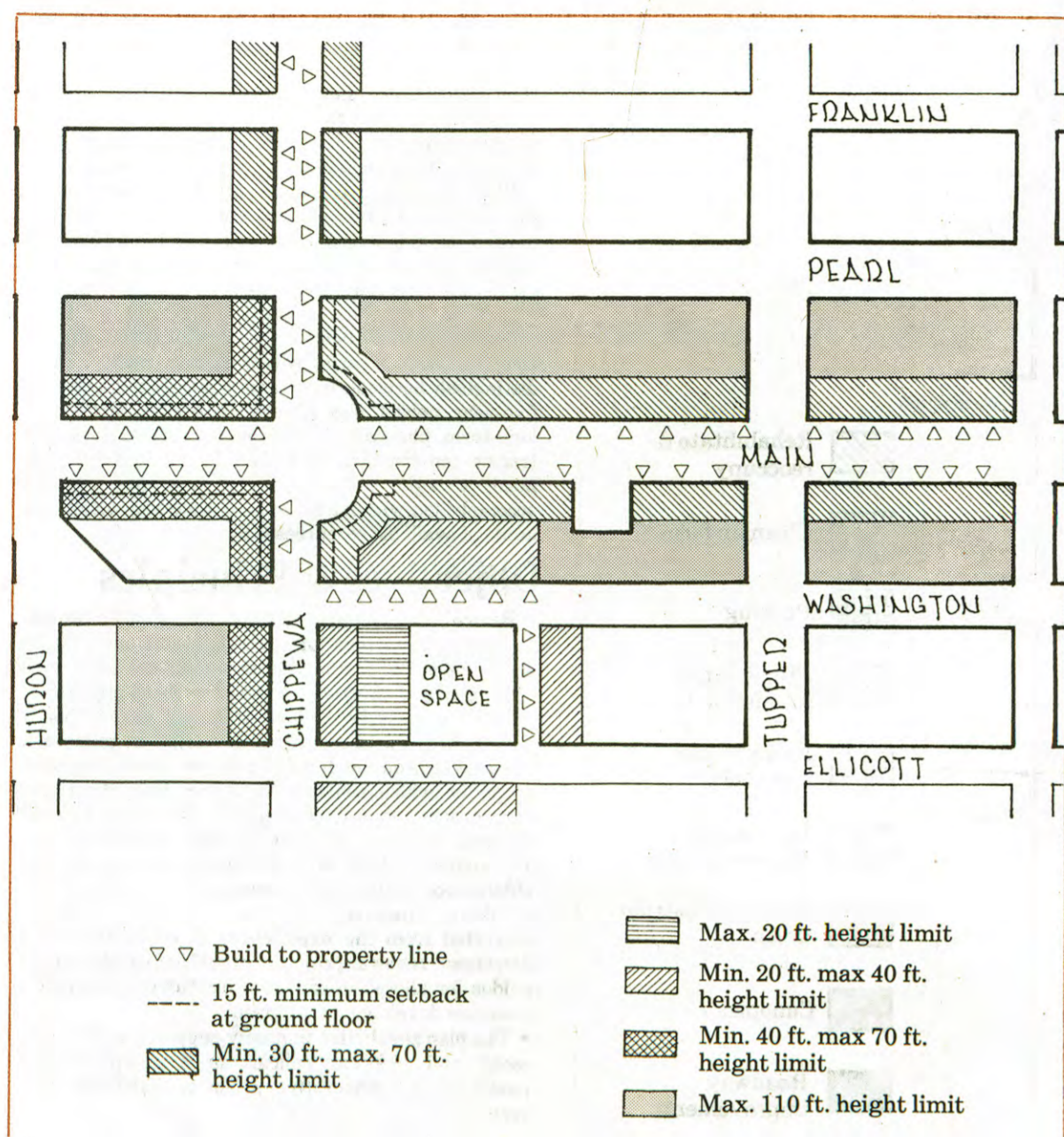
- 5. Adjustments in the provision of public services to encourage development.** Traditional city services can also be adjusted to improve the desirability of the Entertainment District for investment. An example is the City's recent purchase of the former Greyhound Terminal for conversion to a community center, including a permanent police precinct headquarters. This decision has an immediate salutary effect on investment climate in the District. The prospect of around-the-clock police protection will change the area's image and encourage theater patrons to remain in the area.

- 6. University and college involvement in the area.** The economic potential of the District will be significantly enhanced when the State University of New York at Buffalo moves its Center for Theater Research into the former Studio Arena Theater this fall. The present interest of area educational institutions in establishing downtown facilities should be supported vigorously by business and political leaders. Erie Community College's long-delayed City Campus should be constructed in the Downtown. It is the last major unit of the State University system which will be considered for such a location. Additional support should be sought from other city colleges, including the State University College, Canisius, Daemen, D'Youville, and Medaille. Many of the educational programs of the City of Buffalo's public schools could also be located in the Entertainment District.

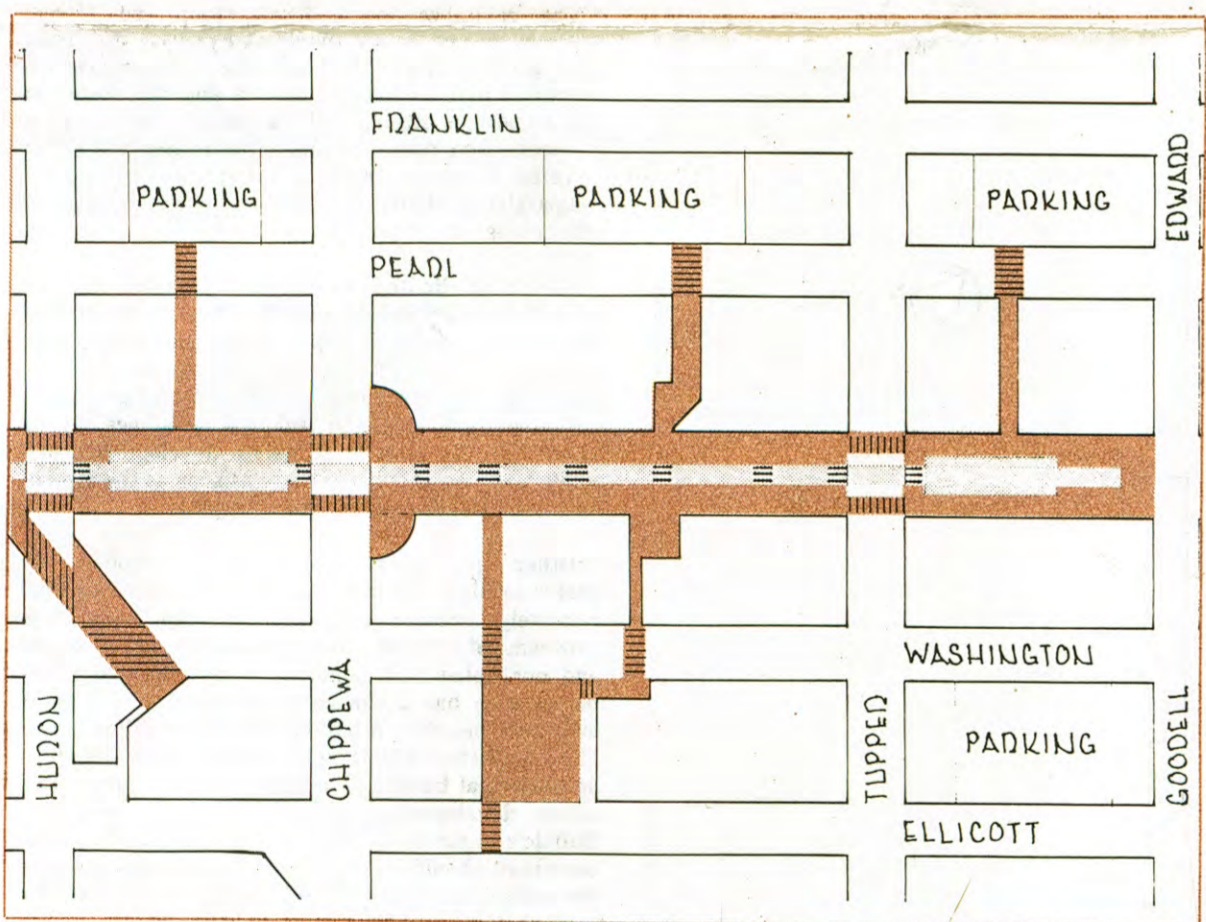
Funds for the programs and incentives we are suggesting are available from a number of public and private sources. The formulation of a detailed development program for the Entertainment District must include a thorough search for maximum local, state, federal and private support. Once a strategy is adopted, each source must be aggressively pursued to assure the full mobilization of resources to support the greatest amount of development. In the short term, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Block Grant and its new Urban Development Action Grant program will be the major source of public aid. We recognize, of course, that there are many competing priorities for these limited sources of funds. No investment should be expected from these sources unless it can generate substantial benefits for all city residents.

Other sources of public funds include:

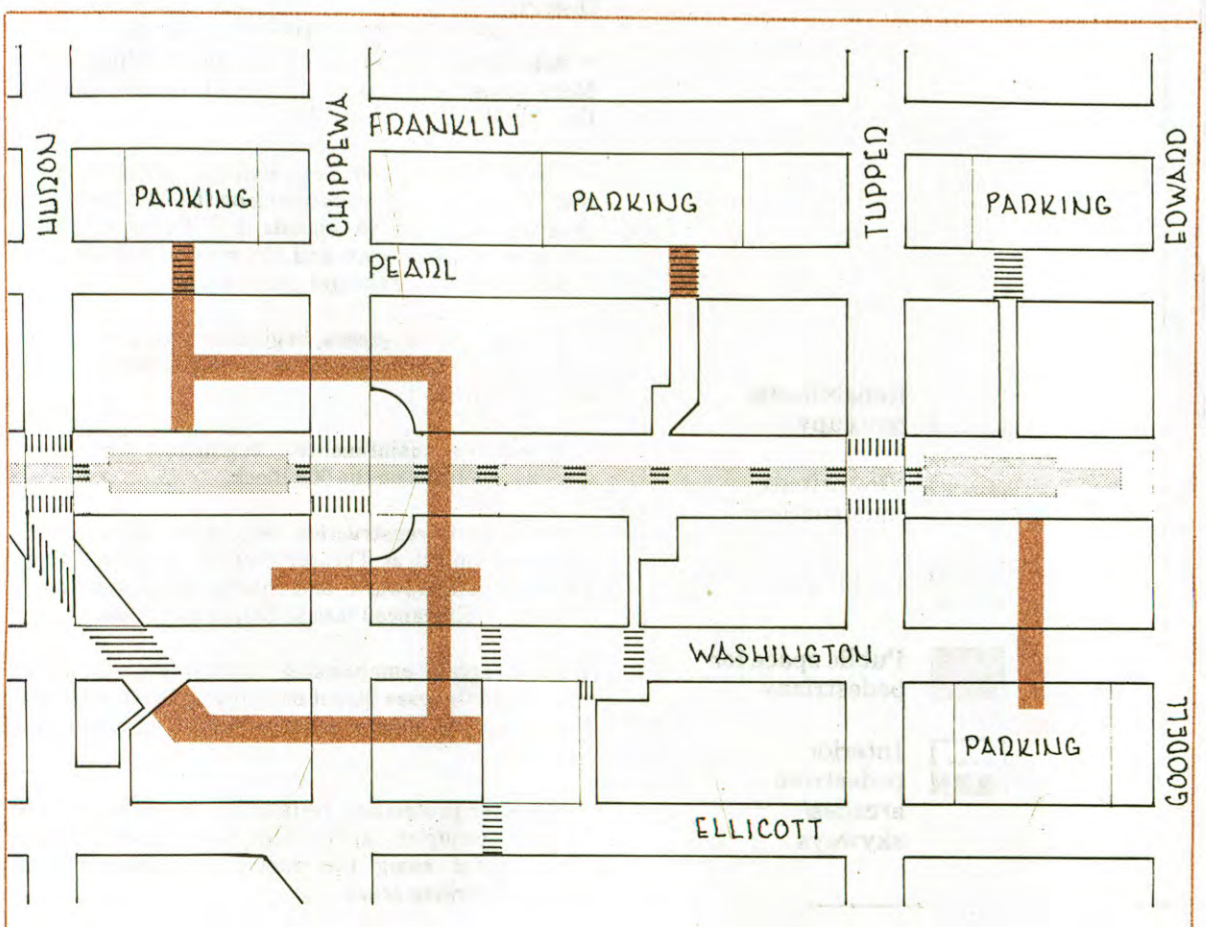
- The Urban Mass Transit Administration's economic joint development program. If the rapid transit system is constructed, the City of Buffalo will receive an estimated \$30-million in economic development aid for projects along transit routes. However, this source of aid will not be available for several years, and is unlikely to have much impact on beginning the development process.
- The Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's program to build urban parks. This money could be used to construct several of the outdoor theaters and public spaces we have recommended.
- The National Endowment of the Arts' "Arts and Architecture" Program, which provides matching grants to study the feasibility of converting historic structures to new economic uses. The Market Arcade should be considered for this assistance.
- The New York State Urban Cultural Parks program which is currently searching for sites to receive state assistance.
- The creation of a transit line special assessment district should also be considered. The construction of the rapid transit will greatly increase the value of land and improvements along Main Street. Part of the increase in value directly attributable to new construction can be recaptured and recycled into other economic development activities. Special assessment districts have been used successfully in other major cities and in the State of California. It would, however, require considerable research and planning and state legislation before the City could create a special assessment district.



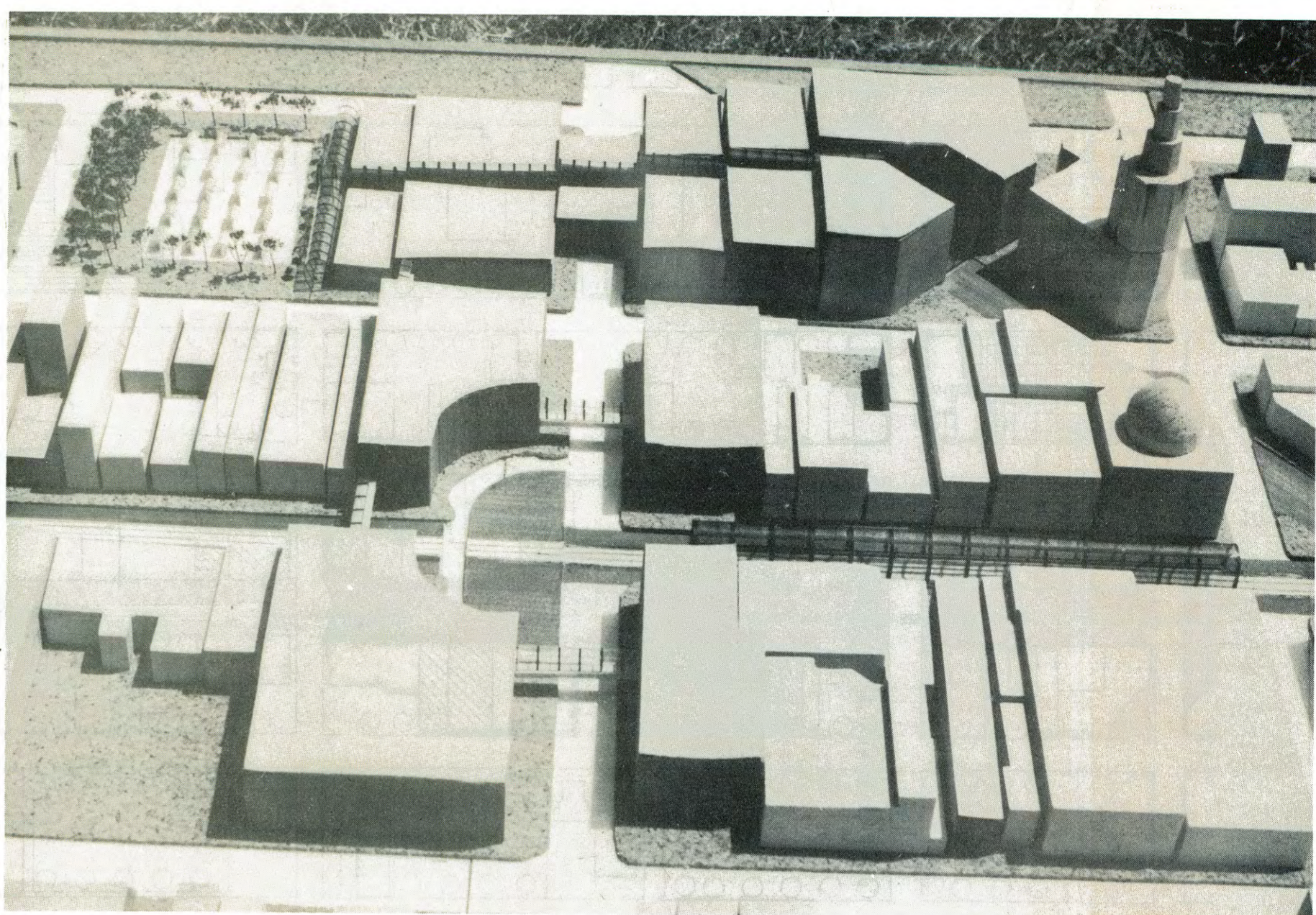
Proposed height and setback requirements diagram



Proposed ground level pedestrian right-of-way plan



Proposed second level pedestrian right-of-way plan



View of model looking east along Chippewa Street
Showing building bulk around entrance plaza and Washington Square.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS

Although primary reliance should be placed on non-regulatory mechanisms, the judicious and affirmative use of controls must be considered to encourage private development decisions which serve essential project objectives. Where necessary, undesirable developments that seriously damage the possibility of achieving long-term project goals should be prohibited. The regulatory mechanisms we recommend are: (1) direct public ownership; (2) sale or lease restrictions; (3) voluntary self-regulation; and (4) mandatory design standards review. Only where these mechanisms are obviously ineffective or inapplicable should (5) existing zoning, sign and facade control ordinances be revised or urban renewal powers be invoked.

1. Public Ownership: To ensure compliance with the Entertainment District Plan, the City of Buffalo should acquire property interests in the area other than those presently owned. One example would be the purchase of easements giving the City the right to renovate the facades of privately-owned buildings, or the right to reserve unimproved land for public use (such as recreation, open space, or landscaping). The purchase of facade easements may be necessary before public funds can be used for renovation, new signage and necessary maintenance. Easements should be arranged at nominal costs. Direct public ownership can also be increased by acquiring title to property through foreclosure for non-payment of property taxes. It has been estimated that the City may be able to assemble as much as 150,000 square feet in this manner (AMRA Report at p. 71).

2. Sale and Lease Restrictions: The most effective method of guiding the redevelopment of the District will be the inclusion of restrictions in leases or deeds to City-owned property. Through covenants, the City can impose architectural, design and use standards which promote the kind of environment and activities suggested in the Plan. Such restrictions will undoubtedly be needed to assure that a reasonable amount of space is preserved for non-profit arts and cultural groups. The presence of these organizations will help to create a desirable atmosphere and to attract private investors. However, the experience of other cities -- for instance, in New York's So-Ho -- has been that such individuals and groups are usually driven out by market forces when rentals begin to exceed their limited resources. This displacement can be avoided if a reasonable amount of space is guaranteed through lease and deed restrictions.

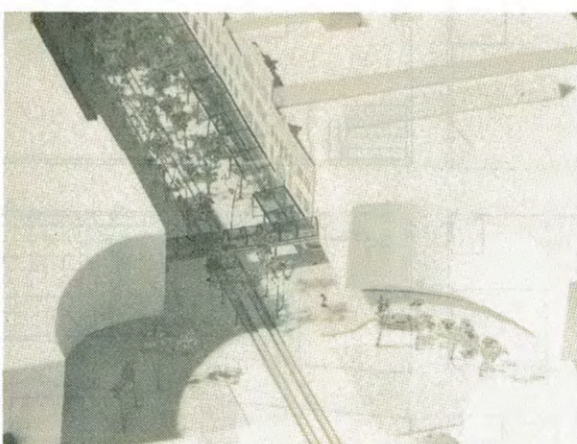
3. Voluntary Controls should be invoked whenever possible. Self-regulation is always preferable to (and certainly cheaper than) official enforcement of zoning and other land use controls. It has been effective in the suburbs because residents and suburban businessmen recognize that they have a stake in preserving the character of their communities and business areas. The same is true of the Entertainment District where the Theater District Association should assume responsibility for policing its own members. An effective system of voluntary self-regulation would significantly reduce the costs to government of implementing and maintaining the Plan.

4. Mandatory Design Review. To ensure that the appearance of new or revitalized buildings satisfies minimum standards, a design review system should be established. The City should provide necessary technical assistance and guidance to assist developers and existing building owners in meeting goals for the area. Standards should be developed in close consultation with property owners. They should be published and made freely available to all interested citizens and developers. They should include rules governing exterior appearance, and the maintenance of walls, rooflines, illumination, signage, and facades. The City should explore the use of incentives to encourage better design and architectural ideas.

5. Zoning. Existing zoning and other land use control regulations should be employed and may need to be revised to achieve the goals of the Entertainment District Plan. The figures and photographs shown on this page illustrate the kind of design controls which should be considered for the Entertainment District. As much as possible, they should be implemented through the use of incentives and voluntary self-regulation. But we disagree with the general statement in the Wallace-McHarg plan for Downtown that "market forces" alone should determine the kinds of uses that establish themselves throughout the Central Business District. The degree of control must vary according to the character of the new urban environment desired. The recommended "use zones" we identified on Page 17 illustrate the proposed differences among geographic areas in the Entertainment District. The use of incentives will encourage the development of these zones, but the City must also be prepared to impose controls to guide private decisions in important cases.

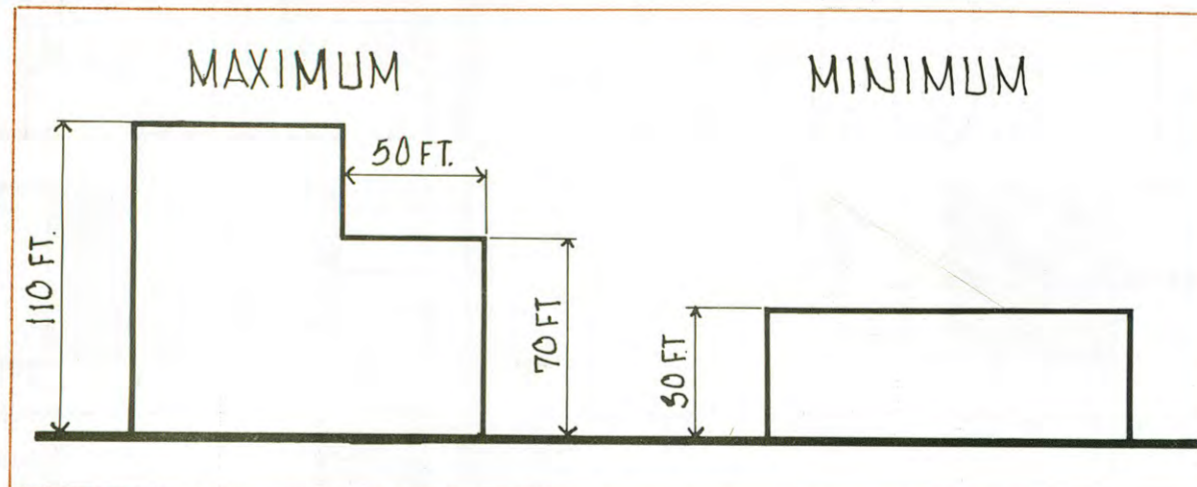
The protection and enhancement of the special character of the 600 Block, for instance, is absolutely essential to the creation of the Entertainment District. As we indicated on Page 16, certain current uses are incompatible with the theme of family entertainment. These include surface parking lots, gas stations, warehousing, and adult uses. These should be encouraged to move to adjacent blocks where they may be appropriate. Only uses that reinforce the suggested family entertainment character of the zone should be permitted. Of course, any decision to use direct controls requires the consent of the Common Council and the judgement of the community that they are essential to preserve the character and enhance the potential of the Entertainment District. Desirable urban design objectives that may be incorporated into land use regulations are indicated in the drawings on this page. They include:

- A ground level pedestrian circulation system. This would include the creation of covered pedestrian arcades along the Main Street Mall and from parking structures.
- A second-level pedestrian skyway system linking the Mall to parking, with the possibility of extension to the major retail center on lower Main Street.
- Height restrictions that preserve the pedestrian and visual character of the streetscape.
- A special entrance zone to the Entertainment District at the corner of Main and Chippewa.
- Facade and sign control standards.
- Other land use controls which are available or which could be considered include:
 - The establishment of a special zoning district.
 - Historic preservation designations.
 - Anti-pornography ordinances modeled on those of Detroit to discourage the spread of adult uses away from Chippewa Street.

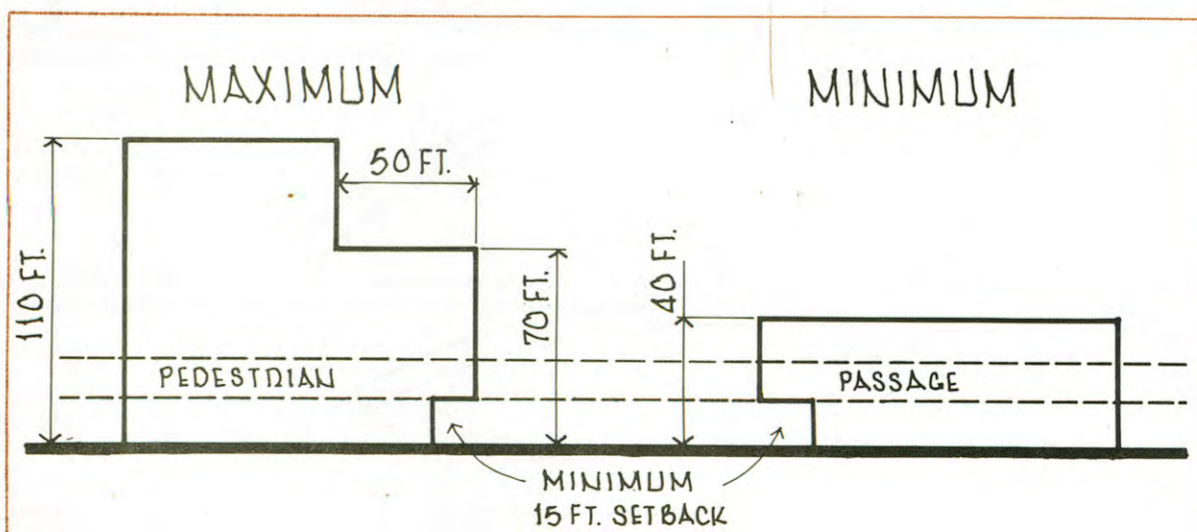


Detail model photo of proposed "Entrance Plaza" to Mall

On 600 Block of Main Street, just north of Chippewa Street - looking north



Proposed height and setback requirements
Section through 600 Block of Main Street



Proposed height and setback requirements
Section through 500 block of Main Street

Phasing

Until the City of Buffalo officially adopts a general development plan for the Entertainment District, it is impossible to outline a detailed program for the revitalization of the area. This task must be reserved for the future consideration of the Mayor. It is possible, however, to do two things at this time:

First, we did identify several basic principles which have guided decisions by other cities in the allocation of their scarce economic development resources. There is every reason to believe that the same principles are just as applicable in the City of Buffalo; and

Second, we can summarize in detail a number of the suggestions implicit in our urban design concept. These recommendations, taken together, can become part of a comprehensive plan for the revitalization of the Entertainment District.

Our suggestions alone do not comprise a final comprehensive plan for the District. They do provide an opportunity for a discussion of the range of projects which should be included in a comprehensive plan.

While additional resources are being marshalled, the sequence of public and private actions needed to implement the plan must be defined. Because resources are scarce, priorities must be established to assure their effective and efficient use. The maps to the left suggest the actions we think should be taken before the revitalization of the Entertainment District will become a reality. They distinguish between long- and short-term phases. A five-year period was chosen to divide short- and long-term phases, because of the uncertainties of transit construction. It should be emphasized that much thought must be given to what can be accomplished within a reasonable time and within the limits of available resources.

Objectives & Principles

Before determining short-term goals, broad, long-term objectives for the Entertainment District should be defined. If limited resources are to be used efficiently and effectively to achieve these objectives, guidelines must be defined that will permit policy makers to evaluate competing development proposals. Those which do not tend to achieve these long-term goals, or which consume resources less effectively than others, should be rejected. We have already outlined a set of fundamental objectives for development; these must be further defined by the official coordinating entity created by the Mayor. We do think, however, that the following principles, extracted from the experiences of other successful downtown renewal projects, should be considered as guides for allocation of limited resources in Buffalo's economic development program:

- The plan should link mutually-supportive economic, social and physical policies in a comprehensive public-private cooperative urban revitalization program;

- Resources should be targeted to a relatively small area. At first, the 600 Block of Main Street is an appropriate target. Our assumption is that secondary development can more easily spread out from a viable core, than fill-in from the periphery of the District;

- The revitalization program should be "front-end loaded." Sufficient public and private resources must be committed in the beginning of the program to overcome public cynicism, inertia and the suspicion that no serious attempt will be made to implement a comprehensive plan. The amount of money and effort invested in early stages of the project should be comparable to similar urban development projects in other cities.

- Except in limited cases (for instance, in the preservation of Shea's Buffalo Theater or in the imposition of essential urban design controls), public agencies should not have a permanent role in managing or developing commercial property. Resources, guidance, and technical assistance should be provided at once to stimulate development, but public involvement should cease as soon as the area is returned to legitimate private enterprise.

Other principles should be developed by professional project managers as soon as possible. Our relatively greater emphasis on the short-term program reflects both uncertainties about the future and our belief that a major, comprehensive effort begun soon has a chance of producing far greater long-term benefits. A half-hearted initial effort is less likely to attract reputable developers with the skills and financial backing needed to attempt large-scale urban development projects. We are aware of Buffalo's extremely limited resources, but this constraint should be considered a challenge to locate the additional funds required to achieve the dramatic goals that are possible.

A suggested short-term program

The following are some suggestions for a short-term urban development program for the Entertainment District:

SHORT-TERM PHYSICAL PLANS

- **Rehabilitate and reoccupy** selected buildings along Main Street, especially the Market Arcade and the Otto Building.

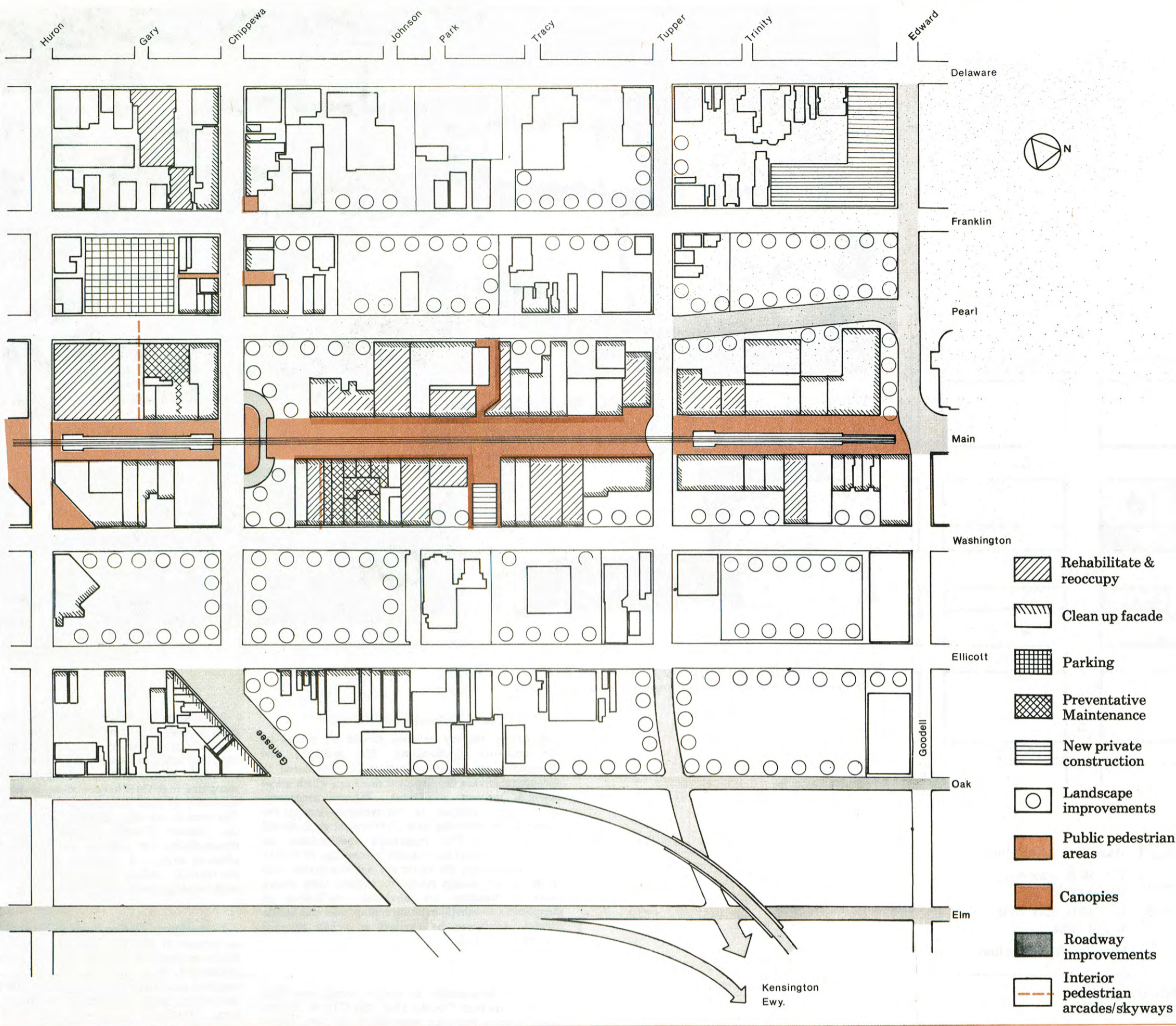
- **Clean facades**, add new signage, and initiate a maintenance program beginning on the 600 Block. The program should also include the Genesee Street entrance to Downtown and the rear of buildings on Pearl Street where theater patrons park.

- **Parking improvements**, beginning with a new ramp to be constructed between Pearl and Franklin Streets, north of Huron.

- **Preventive maintenance**, beginning with city-owned structures on the 600 Block.
- **New private construction**, beginning with commercial development at Theater Square, new housing at Delaware and Edward, and commercial development around the Entrance Plaza at Chippewa Street.

- **Landscaping**, emphasizing improving the appearance of the Genesee Street entrance to Downtown, the Pearl-Franklin blocks and the corner of Main and Genesee.

- **Weather protection:** Installation at public expense of the canopies along the 600 Block; similar development along the pedestrian passages from adjacent parking areas.



Proposed short term development plan



Proposed long term development plan

• **Public pedestrian spaces:** Construction of the Main Street Mall; Theater Square; the Washington Square skating rink/public market; and the closing of portions of Genesee Street between Main and Washington, creating the potential for new development on Washington Street.

• **Roadway improvements:** Complete the Elm-Oak Arterial and the Kensington Expressway exit; widen Edward Street to four lanes; create a new highway linking Pearl to Edward Streets; construct the Entrance Plaza at the corner of Main and Chippewa Street and the new Washington and Ellicott Street connectors.

• Establish design and architectural quality controls.

SHORT-TERM SOCIAL PLANS

• **Create one or more non-profit arts and cultural centers.** Space should be provided on the upper floors of City-owned buildings. A survey of the conditions and characteristics of physical space available in the District should be conducted at once. Available space should then be matched to the needs of groups that express an interest in moving into the District. Each group should be offered office space and communal practice areas. Rents should be based on ability to pay, and groups should be encouraged to invest "sweat equity" in repairing their allotted space. Prime commercial and retail space on the ground floors should be reserved in all cases for new private development.

• **Encourage the area's universities, colleges and public schools** to establish arts-related activities in the District. The lead has already been taken by the State University of New York at Buffalo's Theater Department. Several other institutions have expressed a strong interest in following this lead.

• **A consortium of museums and private art galleries** should be encouraged to open a cooperative sales and display center in the District.

• **New cultural activities** must be attracted to the District, and short-term losses should be subsidized by public and private incentives.

• **An annual Theater District Festival** should be started to showcase the area's attractions.

• **Construct new middle- and upper-income housing** in the District. We suggest it be located near Delaware and Edward, but the possibility of rehabilitated loft housing in existing buildings along Main Street should be explored. More attractive spaces along Main Street should be reserved for commercial uses.

• **Improve police protection and other public services** to increase public confidence in the safety and appearance of the District and to encourage private investment. A major step has already been taken with the announcement that the City has purchased the former Greyhound Terminal for use as a community center and police precinct house.

SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC PLANS

• **Provide direct and indirect aid, loans and subsidies** to encourage new private retail, commercial and entertainment investment, beginning on the 600 Block on Main Street.

• **Initiate an exhaustive, systematic search** for alternative public and private funding for District development. Package these funds to attract a greater range of private matching funds. Avoid dependence on Community Development Block Grants.

• **Introduce new commercial development** to the ground floors of City-owned structures on the 600 Block.

• **Encourage specific types of new private construction**, beginning with the area near Main and Chippewa Streets. Incentives could be used to encourage a first-run movie house and restaurant for the area.

• **Clarify tax, bankruptcy, and land title problems** in the District as soon as possible. Acquire key properties that are essential links in long-term economic development; create an environment in which market forces can reestablish real value in District property.

• **Develop, publish and vigorously promote** a set of economic development policies, operating procedures and guidelines which clarify exactly what is expected before investors are eligible for public incentives.

A suggested long-term program

Long-term physical, social and economic development will continue and extend short-term activities. The necessity for public investment will cease with the construction of the transit system and the completion of commercial revitalization programs along Main Street. The rehabilitation and reoccupation of revitalized structures will continue as new commercial uses fill remaining space on upper floors. New private construction will transform Chippewa Street and Washington Square. New ramps will be built in the Pearl-Franklin and Washington-Ellicott service zones as demand for parking increases. New weather-protected pedestrian space in the form of aerial skyways will be constructed linking parking ramps to the mall and to the Chippewa Street adult entertainment zone. The District will be completely revitalized by the end of the Twentieth Century.

Development management and coordination

Management criteria

A Public-Private Partnership: Before we began to think about the kind of management entity that might offer a fair chance of implementing our urban design scheme, we conducted an informal survey of reportedly successful downtown revitalization efforts in other cities. The cities and the projects we examined included:

- Boston's Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market
- Baltimore's Inner Harbor
- Philadelphia's Gallery
- Galveston's Strand
- Detroit's Renaissance Center

We were not looking for "models" that could be instantly transplanted to Buffalo with the promise of magical success. Instead, we sought clues to the principles behind these success stories which might be useful in organizing Buffalo's downtown revitalization program.

One characteristic does stand out when one examines these projects: they involve significant participation by the private sector. For example, Galveston's acclaimed Strand is funded by Texas oil interests, largely without public help. Detroit's Renaissance Center reflects Henry Ford II's commitment to revitalize that city's downtown. Many of the business corporations that are now financing an innovative set of economic development activities in Detroit are, significantly, major suppliers to Ford Motor Company. Both Boston's Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market and Philadelphia's Gallery are managed by the Rouse Corporation, a private commercial developer. Baltimore's Inner Harbor project is coordinated by a non-profit management corporation which has had more than fifteen years' experience. To these should be added the leadership roles of the Mellon and Heinz Families in the revitalization of Pittsburgh, and of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City. A 1978, HUD-funded study of 25 downtown commercial developments reinforced our impression: "Cities with public/private cooperation in planning and implementing downtown development plans appear to be more successful than those where one sector undertakes most of the work." Our recommendation, therefore, is that the implementation of the Entertainment District Plan should involve the active participation of the private sector.

individuals. Their ideas and suggestions must be integrated into the comprehensive program for the District, and their assistance orchestrated to achieve common goals. We have sketched some of these interests and jurisdictions in the figure below to illustrate the range and complexity of the coordination problem. Our second recommendation is, therefore, that the function of project coordination be clearly placed in a central location. Because of the complexity of the tasks involved, even with an optimum spirit of cooperation among city, county, regional, state, and federal agencies and individuals and organizations in the private sector, there would nevertheless be a need for a centrally-located management entity.

Other Management Criteria: The additional criteria we think are necessary to design, compose and locate this entity include:

- A capacity to get public and private participants to work together to achieve common goals.
- Professional managerial effectiveness.
- The ability to organize and initiate action on the District Plan immediately.
- The ability to make decisions to target resources and efforts on the Entertainment District program exclusively, without distraction from competing concerns.
- The inclusion of safeguards to assure public accountability without sacrificing effective management capacity.
- A "self-destructive" quality. When the development goals of the program are substantially achieved, the entity should be phased out of existence.
- Maintaining a small professional staff to assure that no unnecessary permanent bureaucracy is created.

A proposed corporate management entity

Applying these criteria, we reviewed a number of alternatives for an effective management system. These included delegating full development authority to an existing city agency, the creation of a new public authority under New York State law, and the use of the New York Urban Development Corporation to

coordinate development. None of these suggestions possessed all of the desirable characteristics we sought. Some were centrally located, but lacked local accountability. Others were accountable and possessed a desirable set of powers, but lacked the technical skills and experience necessary to run a project of this kind. Still others would simply have led to an increase in bureaucracy without any appreciable gain in management efficiency. We concluded that a semi-autonomous, non-profit corporation should be formed under the laws of the State of New York.

Functions of the Management Corporation: The principal functions of the Entertainment District Development Corporation should include:

- Promoting the District as an investment opportunity.
- Coordinating the plan to establish an attractive location for individuals and organizations which will create the kind of urban environment envisioned in the District Plan.
- Managing City-owned land and buildings in the District.
- Supervising short-term leases of City-owned property in the District.
- Marketing City-owned properties in the District. These should be sold or leased on a long-term basis. The Corporation should conduct lease and sale negotiations as agent for the City of Buffalo.
- Rehabilitating and beautifying buildings and space in the District, directly or through agreements with private owners.
- Receiving and distributing grants or loans for rehabilitation or redevelopment of land or structures to public or private owners.
- Coordinating efforts by public agencies and private interests to improve public facilities serving the district.
- Discharging general management responsibilities necessary to the successful achievement of program goals and to the maintenance of project operations.

Structure of the Management Entity: We recommend that the Corporation should consist of three divisions: (1) a board of directors; (2) a broadly-based advisory committee; and (3) an executive staff.

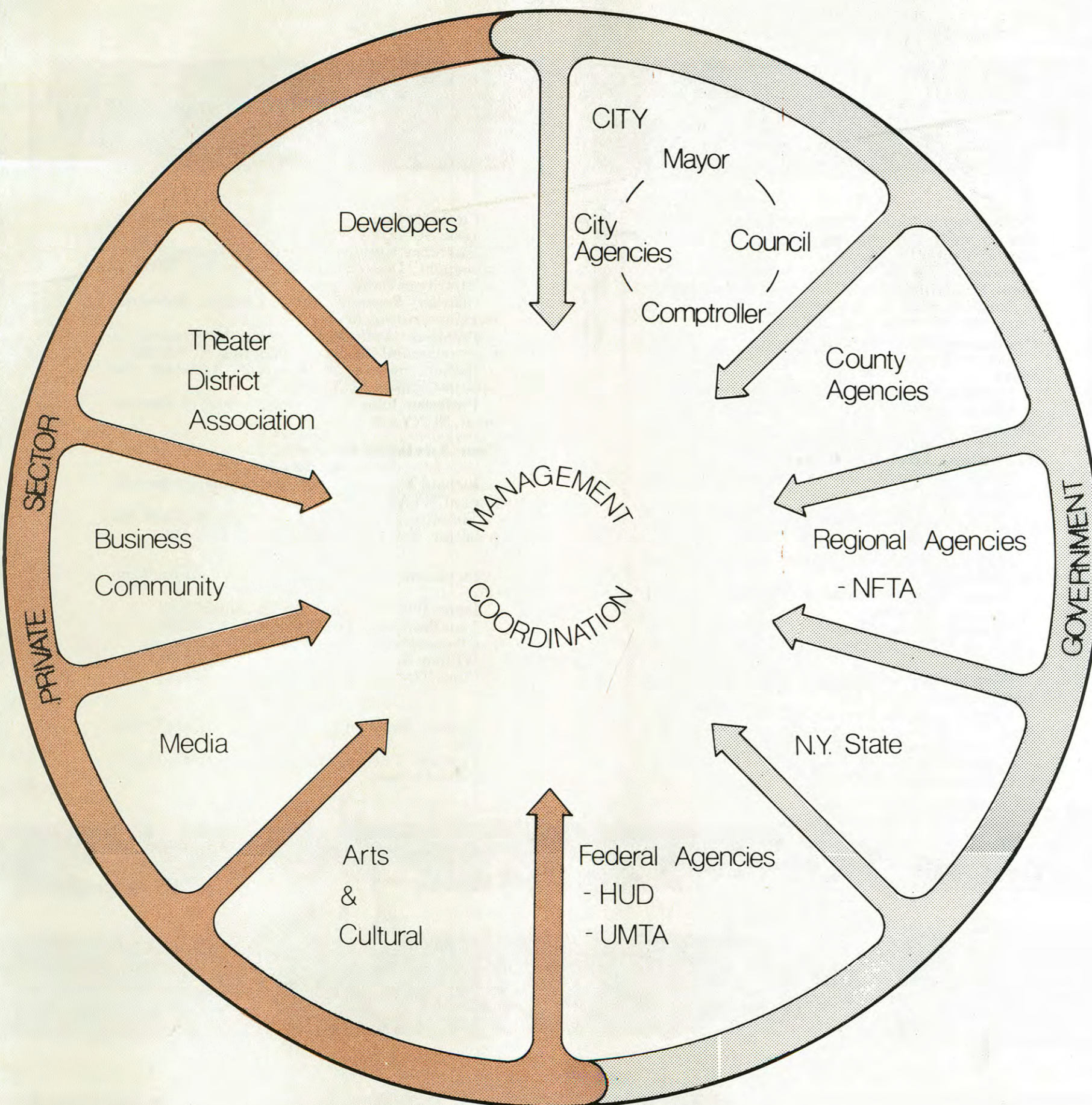
• **The Board of Directors** should be a working unit. It should represent the key public agencies and private interests that will provide and which possess the major resources to implement the Entertainment District Plan. This requirement dictates a relatively dominant role for the City of Buffalo, which will provide the greatest amount of investment in the short term. The Board should be small enough to meet frequently and to make timely, informed decisions on development policy, the marketing of publicly-owned property, and the many other business decisions associated with the Project. For the most part, the Board's members should be selected on the basis of the position they hold, rather than as individuals. This will promote the continuity of interest and dedication required from Board members. They should be selected from sufficiently high places in the organizations they represent so that they can speak and vote with authority in Board deliberations.

• **The Executive Staff** should be limited in size. It should provide direction to the management of the corporation, run the Project office, and provide necessary legal services. Rather than develop its own bureaucracy, the executive office (with consent of the Board of Directors) should contract with public agencies and private organizations and individuals for most necessary tasks. For instance, if rehabilitation of structures on Main Street is required, the Corporation would enter into a contract with a public agency with the skills and the authority to perform the service, such as the City Department of Public Works or the New York State Urban Development Corporation.

• **The Advisory Committee** should be sufficiently broad to permit a diverse set of community, arts, economic, social and governmental interests to contribute their expertise and judgements to the shaping of development policy by the Board of Directors. An example would be the existing Advisory Boards we established for the Entertainment District Project. Many of these individuals and organizations are interested in continuing their involvement with the long-term development of the District. The Advisory Committee would also report on Project activities to the groups and organizations they represent.

Resources for the Management Entity. Government grants and loans must be relied upon for the considerable start-up costs of developing the Entertainment District. During the first few years, federal Community Development Block Grant and Urban Development Action Grant funds are the only available sources of the necessary funds. The corporation, in collaboration with the City and other government entities, must earnestly seek additional sources of revenue to finance development. Rentals, taxes or special assessments payable by private entrepreneurs or property owners in the District should eventually produce sufficient revenue to sustain management activities and recoup the initial public investment.

Centrally-Placed Coordination: The achievement of desirable economic, physical and social development goals in the Entertainment District will also depend on the coordination and mobilization of support from a variety of public agencies, private organizations and



Development Management and Coordination-Concept Diagram



Credits

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Commissioner William Donohue, Department of Community Development.
Lawrence Quinn, Director of Economic Development.

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