



CONCEPTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

As a result of the inventory material gathered, in the form of historical perspective, building conditions, interviews and public opinion survey, a series of goal statements were agreed upon. These goals reflect the attitudes and aspirations of many people in Montpelier toward the direction of future growth in the City. These goals will provide a basis for future planning and future decisions, and if followed, will result in a certain consistent quality in future development.



Capital City Montpelier should set the best possible example to the people of Vermont because it is the capital City.

Parking The City should provide parking on a reasonable scale for commercial patrons, rather than each merchant providing a few spaces.

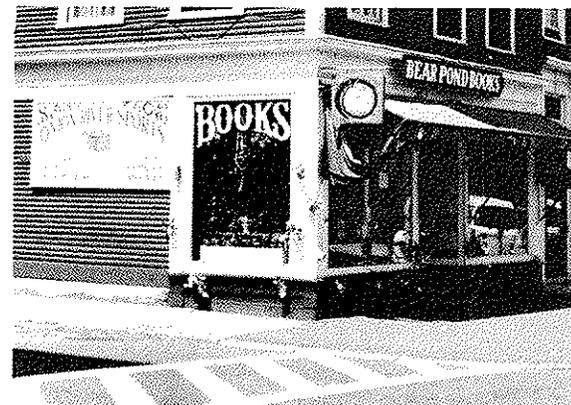
Pedestrians Pedestrian use of the City should be a pleasurable and meaningful interaction between the City and the natural setting. Cars and pedestrians should be separated — people in front of store and cars behind.

Climate The Vermont climate should be a strong determinate in the evolving design of the City.

Historic Buildings Architectural and historically significant buildings are a valuable asset, are worth saving, and can and should be adapted for modern functions.

Merchandise The City should continue to emphasize quality merchandise and an increasing selection of good shops.

Mixed Usage Mixed usage of space in downtown buildings should be encouraged. People coming and going at various times of day and night adds vitality and security to the City.



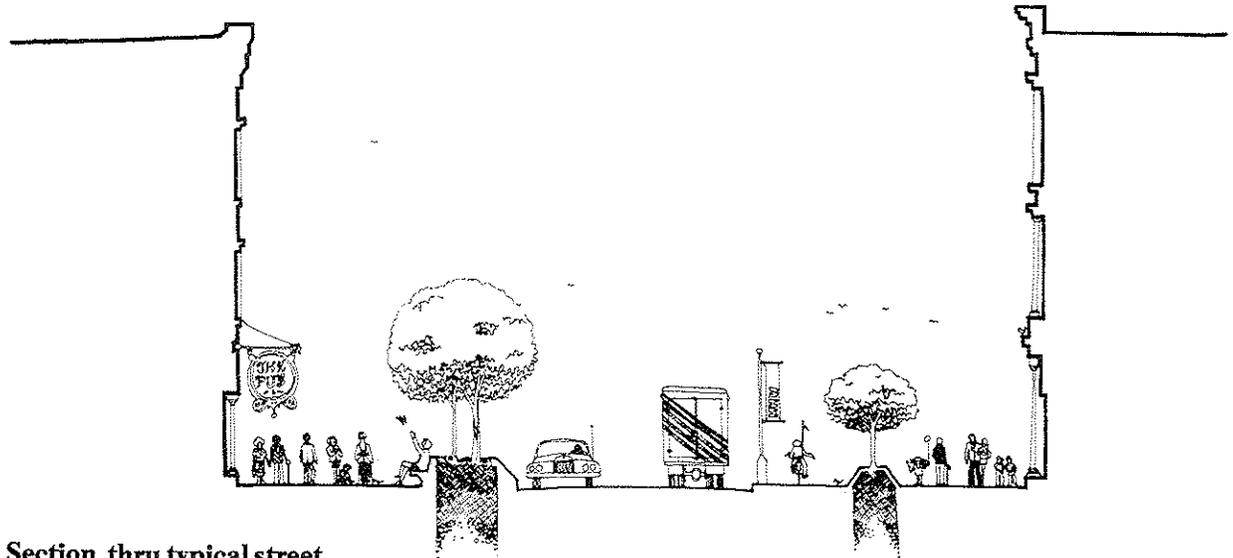
City Form The City form to a large degree has been determined by natural features: topography and rivers. The relationship or awareness of the City user to these features should be reinforced. The containment created by natural features is important to City definition, and should be recognized in planning future growth.

Open Space The views out of the City to the hills, the two rivers, and the existing parks are vital parts of the open space in the City that should be reinforced.

Regional Focus Montpelier should be the focus commercially, educationally and culturally for the surrounding region. These functions would be less effective if they were widely scattered.

PLANNING CONCEPTS

Based on the collected background data and the goals established for the future of Montpelier, a series of ideas or concepts was developed to guide future planning. The concepts are thought of as steps to be taken, and important features to be recognized, in order to achieve long range goals. These concepts have been incorporated into the planning recommendations that follow. It is not proposed that these ideas be achieved overnight, however, it is suggested that these steps be deliberately taken to achieve real results.



Section thru typical street

People and Cars

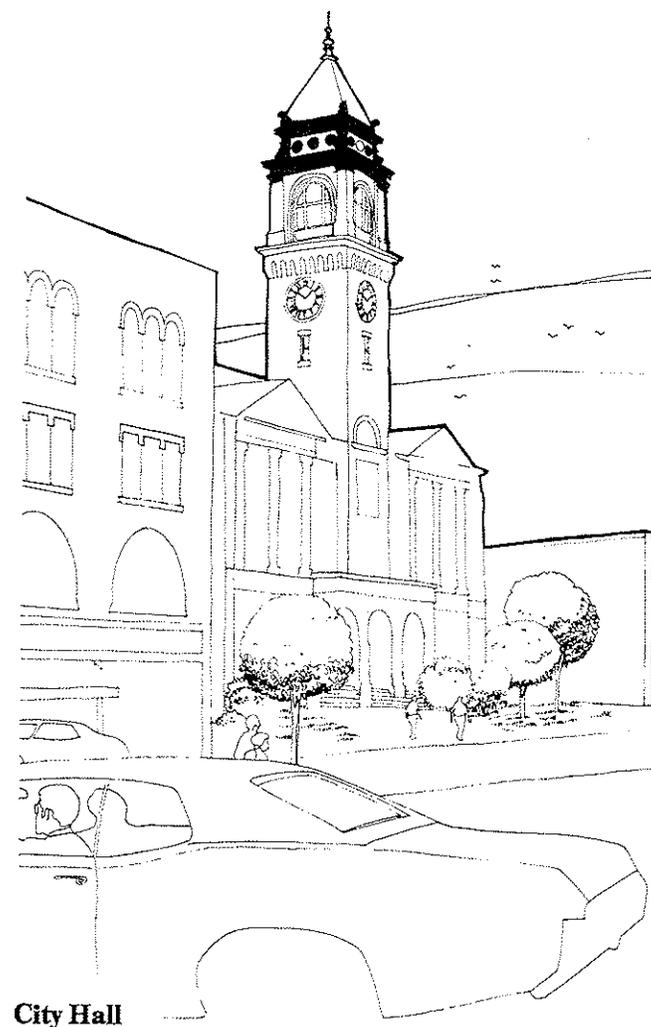
It has been established that people and cars should be separated with more street space given to pedestrian activity and amenity. The drawing indicates a first step in providing more space along State and Main Streets for people. As public or private off-street parking becomes available, select parking spaces can be eliminated on the street, having the effect of improving traffic flow, and providing the opportunity for widening the sidewalks, adding planting and seating. As further traffic and parking solutions are found, portions or all of State and Main Streets could be closed to vehicular traffic.



City Imagery

Montpelier is fortunate to have a collection of buildings that provide strong visual identifiers to people using the City. These buildings have distinct forms that are immediately recognizable anywhere in town, and identify different areas of the City. The Capitol building is the symbol of State government as the City Hall tower is the symbol of downtown Montpelier. Church towers perform similar identification functions in other parts of the City.

Every effort should be made to preserve these landmark buildings because of their importance in making the City understandable and their great contribution to City character.



City Hall

Vistas

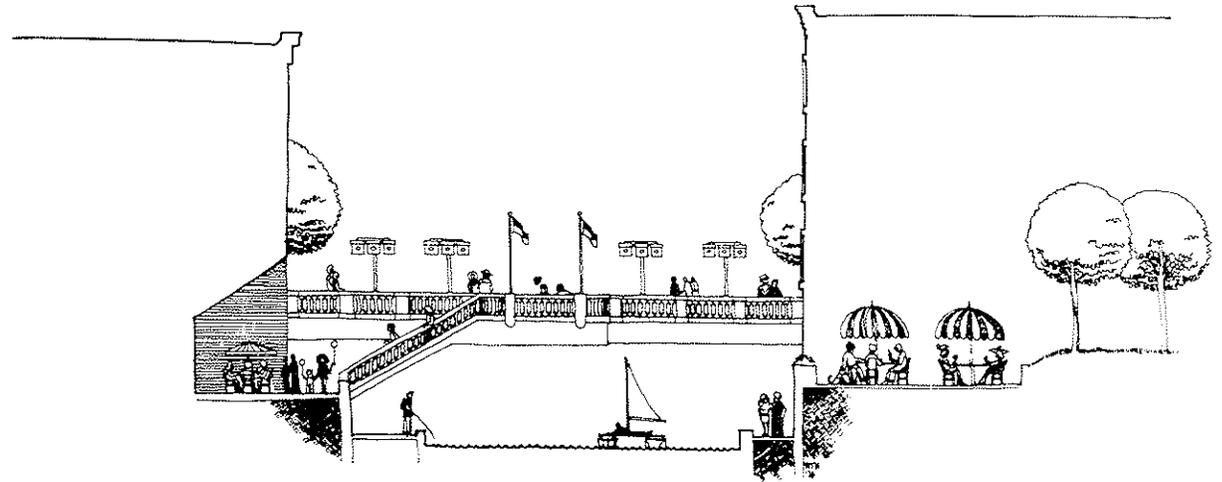
Since Montpelier is contained by hills on all sides and has a somewhat irregular street pattern, virtually all streets are closed visually at their ends either by buildings or hills. This is an important feature because it reinforces the feeling of containment within the City. Movement through the City is characterized by passing from one defined space to another. Buildings that stop vistas at the end of streets are very important to the City, and any changes to these buildings must be considered with great care. Similarly, views along streets out to the hills are important and anything that might interrupt these views should be given careful consideration.



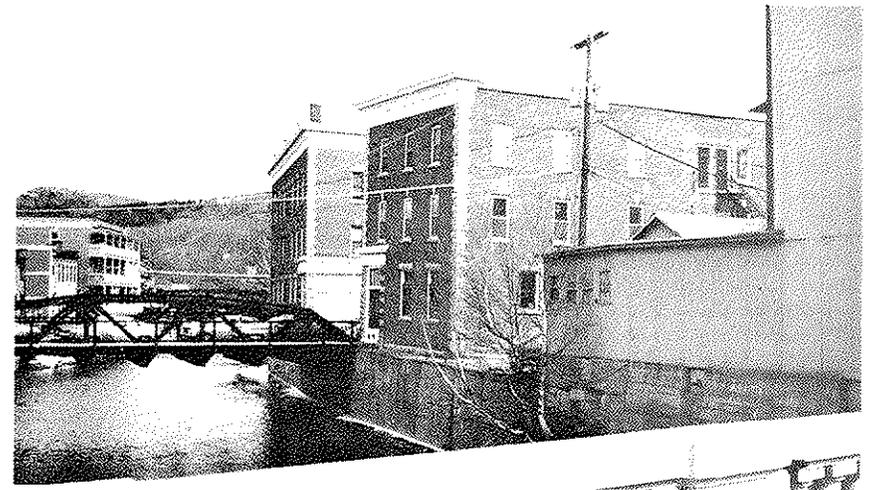
Looking south on Elm Street

Rivers

The Winooski and North Branch Rivers that pass through Montpelier could be important visual assets to the City but have always been considered just a nuisance. Today the rivers are almost totally ignored by the City users. It is proposed here that the rivers be developed as a part of an open space system to connect public open spaces in the City with the countryside. A walkway should be developed along the North Branch that would begin at the Winooski and carry on through town, through residential neighborhoods into the country. As shown in the illustration, this walk could be like a boardwalk, built within the present masonry walls that define the river, pass under the street bridges, and have access down to the water and up to the streets at various points. Areas behind buildings could be developed to relate to boardwalk activity, and the river itself could be used for limited boating in the summer and skating in the winter.



Section thru river at State Street



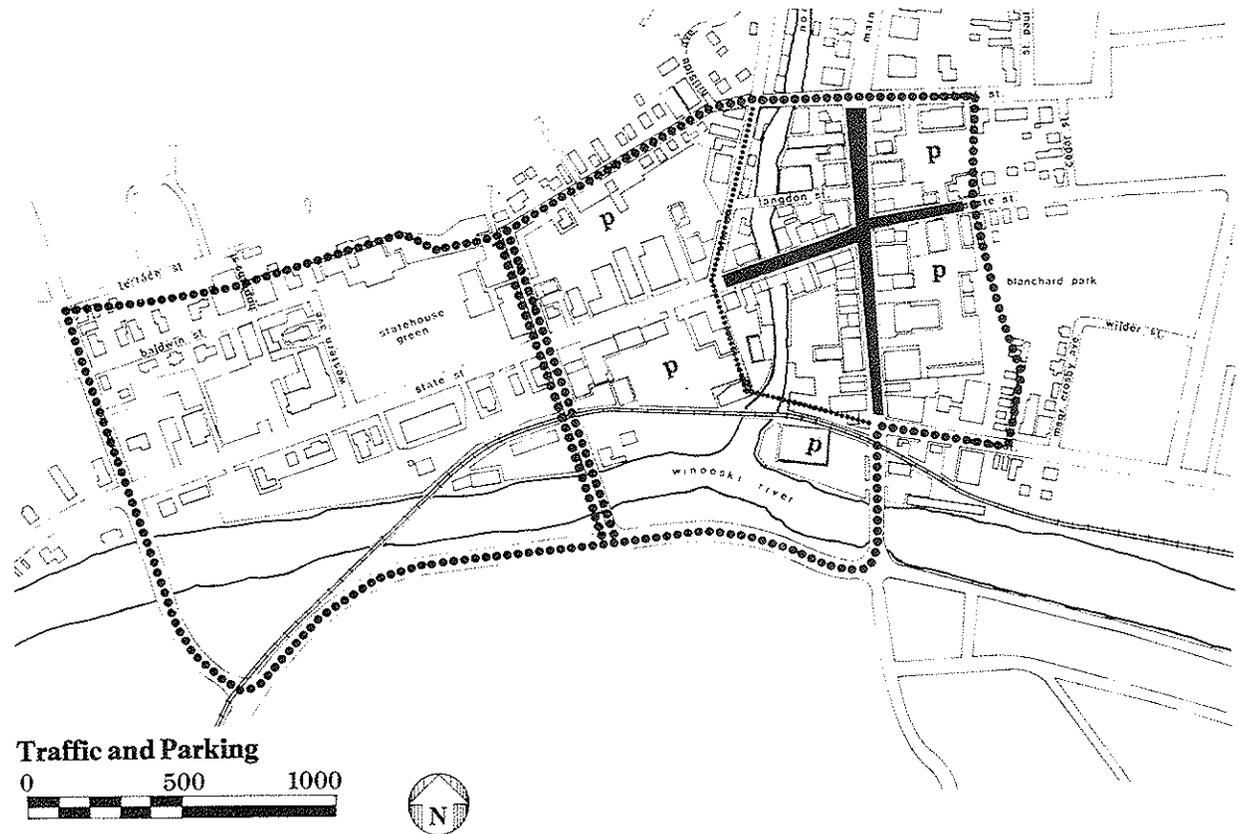
Traffic and Parking

Traffic and parking are major considerations in any kind of future planning in Montpelier. Any changes to the downtown area particularly, must first find solutions to providing adequate parking and improving traffic flow.

The improvement of parking in Montpelier will be a gradual process of first providing public off-street lots in open areas behind existing buildings. As the demand for parking spaces increases, the lots would give away to parking structures that would greatly increase the number of available spaces over a period of time.

Traffic is already a problem at certain times of day in Montpelier, and is certain to become worse in the future. The goal of a traffic plan should be to relieve congestion on State and Main Streets by providing optional routes through the City. It is proposed that a new street be constructed between Barre and School Streets, partially on the alignment of present Downing Street behind City Hall. With improvements to Court and School Streets, a counterclockwise two lane, one way loop would be created around the perimeter of the Central Business District as indicated on the diagram. In conjunction with a loop proposed in the 1975 Capitol Complex Masterplan around the Capitol Complex, traffic would be diverted around the most congested and troublesome areas in the City. Both of these traffic loops are feasible and have been endorsed by the State Highway Department.

The loop around the Central Business District, with public parking related to it and to the existing stores, would permit the closing of



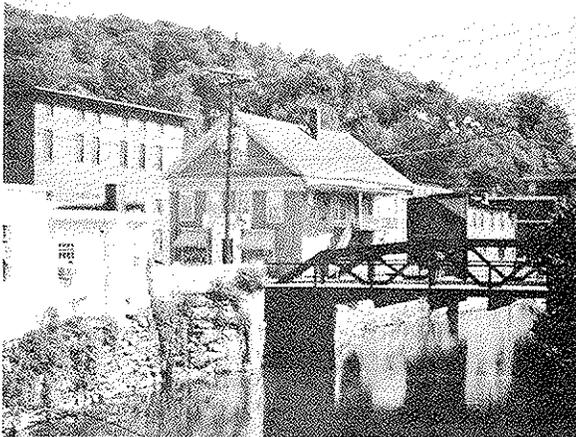
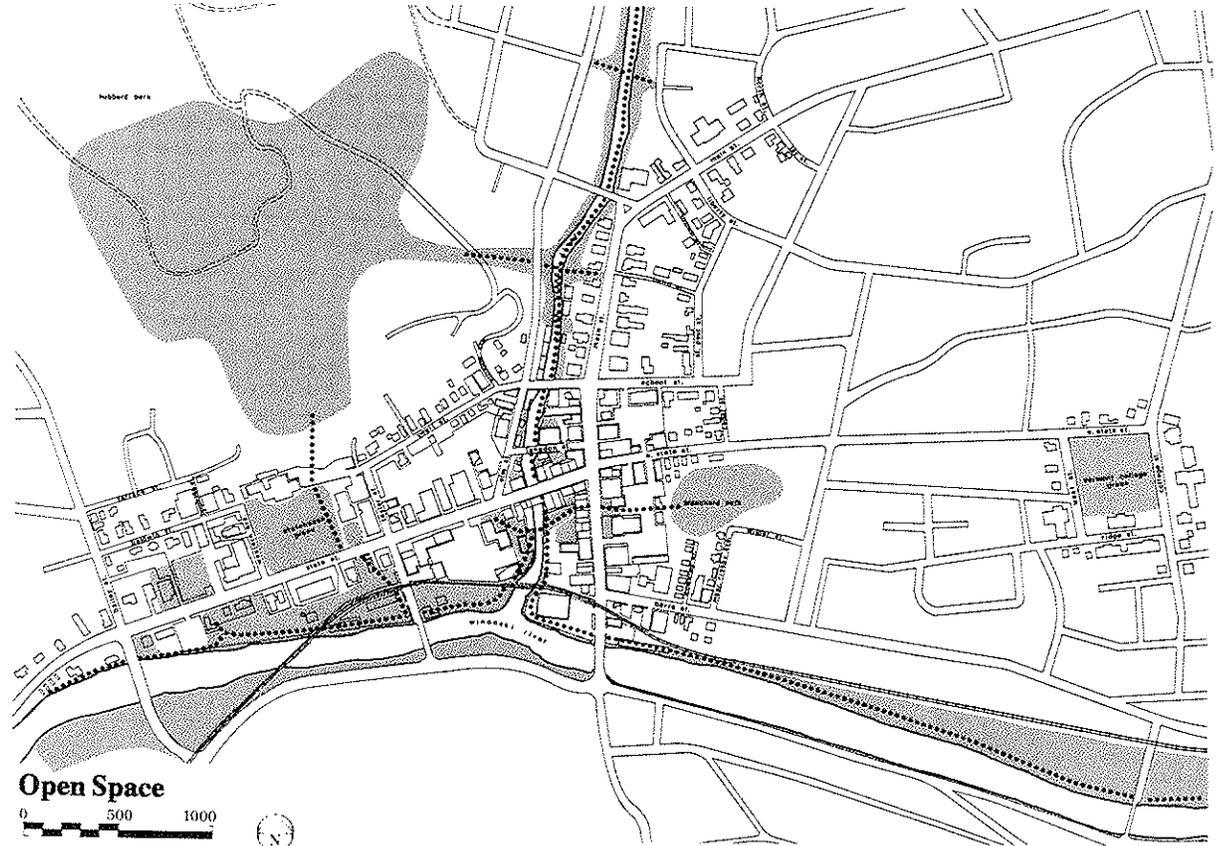
portions of State and Main Streets to vehicular traffic. A pedestrian shopping street is therefore feasible in Montpelier.

The extension of Elm Street to Barre Street has also been shown as an alternate traffic route on the diagram. This is only feasible after the main traffic loop is completed and Main Street is closed to traffic. Since the loop is proposed as one-way in a counterclockwise direction, unmanageable congestion at the intersection and at the Main Street bridge is avoided.



Open Space

Existing open spaces in the City, like Hubbard Park, Blanchard Park and the Statehouse Green, are important to the quality of life in Montpelier. It is proposed that in conjunction with the Winooski and North Branch Rivers, an open space or green space system be established. Starting in front of the Statehouse in the Capitol Complex, a pedestrian walkway-bicycle path system would extend along the Winooski to the North Branch, and up the North Branch through the City into residential neighborhoods and on into the country. There are many areas of the river bank through the City that could be developed for this purpose, and the river itself could be used as a walkway as indicated in the preceding section on Rivers. It is the intent of this proposal to reinforce the existing open space in the City and develop the rivers as a means of linking these spaces. This system will provide an alternate pedestrian route through the business district consistent with the re-emergence of pedestrian activity in the City.



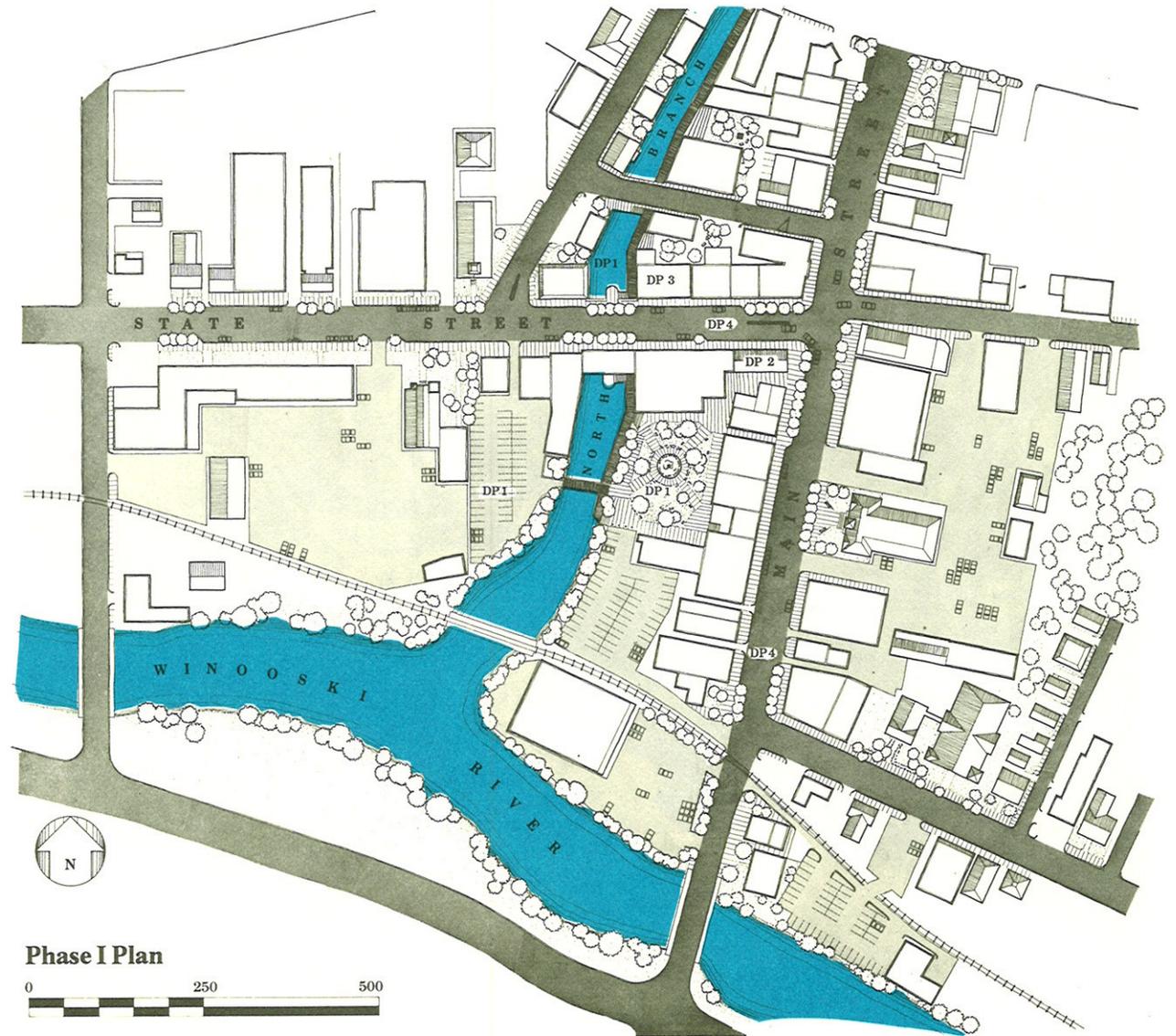
PHASE I PLAN

The initial plan proposal concentrates on the Central Business District and deals with changes that can be started immediately. The intent of this activity is to begin to change the image of downtown Montpelier through a series of sensible steps with the goal being to make downtown more viable commercially and pleasant for people.

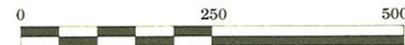
The plan consists of the following elements:

Parking: Public parking is proposed in two locations: in the Fernandez Block, behind Christ Church, requiring the removal of a brick warehouse building and a small concrete block garage; and in an area behind the Tomasi building, requiring the removal of the gas storage tanks. The addition of this parking permits selective removal of some street parking spaces.

Open Space: An open space system is proposed along the North Branch beginning at the Fernandez Block parking lot. Parking is separated from the river by a green strip, and a pedestrian bridge carries people over the river to a landscaped space behind the Frenches Block and the Vogue Shop Building. New entrances to Main Street stores would open onto this space. A walkway is proposed north along the North Branch under State,



Phase I Plan



- DP1 - Demonstration Project No. 1
- DP2 - Demonstration Project No. 2
- DP3 - Demonstration Project No. 3
- DP4 - Demonstration Project No. 4

Langdon and Court Streets. Access to the walkway would occur at various places along the way and it would function as described earlier in the "Concept" section on Rivers.

Buildings: Most of the buildings in the Central Business District have historical significance and are very sound structures. The plan proposes that these buildings be restored to their original condition, and that storefronts and signs be updated consistent with the quality of the original building design. In one location it is suggested that a building be removed and in another that a building be added. These building recommendations are indicated on the elevation drawings.

Streets: Along with the anticipated increase in off-street public parking, and in conjunction with the Topics program, street parking is eliminated at select points along State and Main Streets, and sidewalks are widened. These widened areas provide places for planting, paving, seating and other street furniture elements. Space in the street is thereby provided for people — an important first step in giving Montpelier a new pedestrian emphasis.



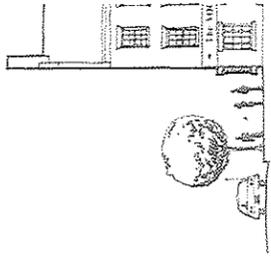
ELEVATIONS

The elevation drawings show both sides of State and Main Streets in the Central Business District. The drawings suggest changes to buildings along these streets as a part of the Phase I plan proposal. Buildings are shown in a restored state with the appropriate changes incorporated.

These drawings are only intended to suggest possibilities for improving the street elevations in the downtown area, consistent with the standards established in the manual, and are not intended to be the only design solutions.

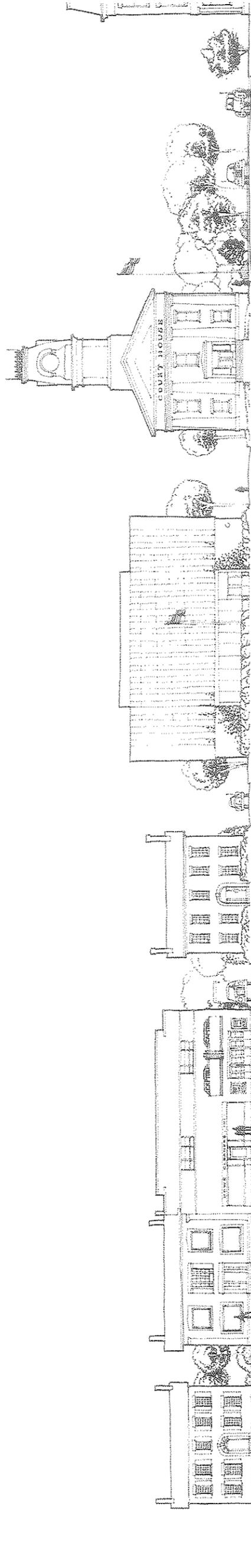
Individual building situations must be considered in greater detail than has been done here. While it is expected that actual designs for projects may differ in detail from those shown here, the elevations do indicate what is considered to be an appropriate direction for improvements in the central city.

It is suggested that existing building heights and setbacks are important design determinants in areas of concentrated buildings. This does not imply, however, that buildings of a height greater than 3 or 4 stories are necessarily inappropriate elsewhere in the City.



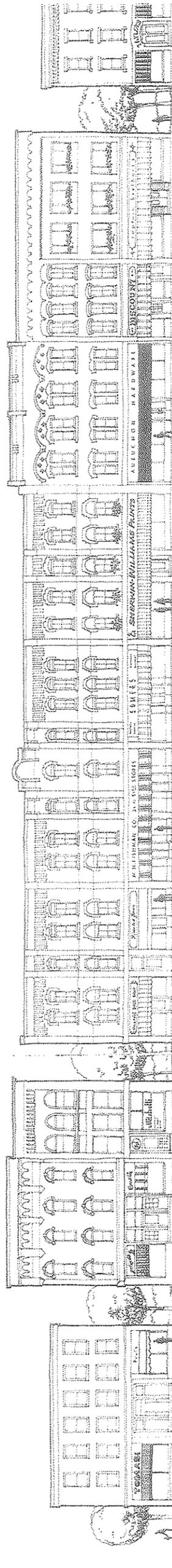
Aluminum
Brick dk
New sign
First floor
New bay
Brick con
New door

Elevation of south st



Creeping ivy planned at base of building facade
Building facade and side walls painted in earth color (brick red, raw umber, burnt sienna)

Elevation of north side of State Street



New sign and canvas awning for "Paul's"
 New canvas awning for "Tomasi"
 Facade on upper two floors cleaned and painted

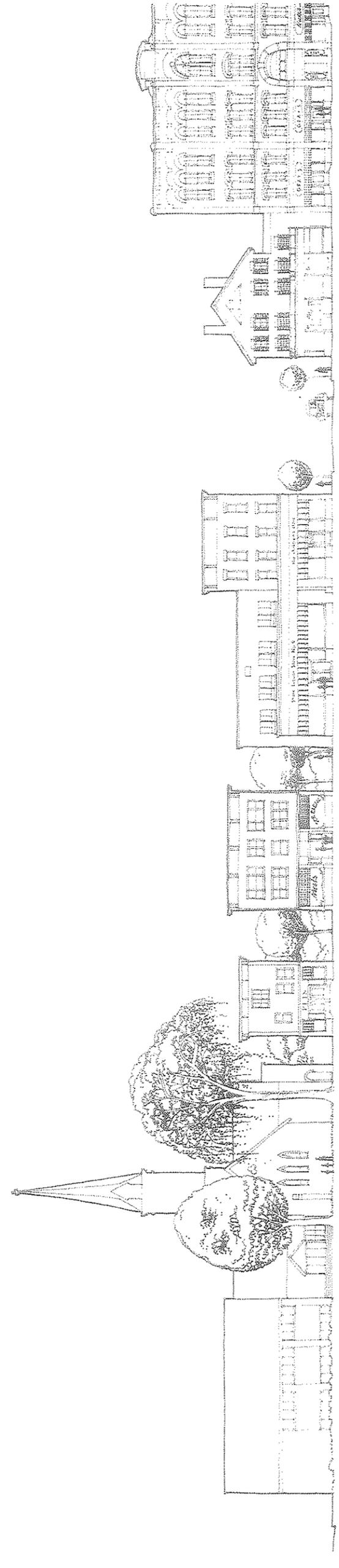
New sign and canvas awning for antique shop
 Existing sign removed
 False "roof" removed on storefront above entrance
 New signage added
 Canvas awning added

Existing sign removed
 New signage added
 Canvas awning added

Smaller sign replaced existing sign
 New "Big L Discount" sign
 New window boxes
 Canvas awnings

Aluminum siding
 Facade underneath
 Canvas awnings
 New signs
 New storefront on "Country Store"
 "Country Store"

Elevation of west side of Main Street

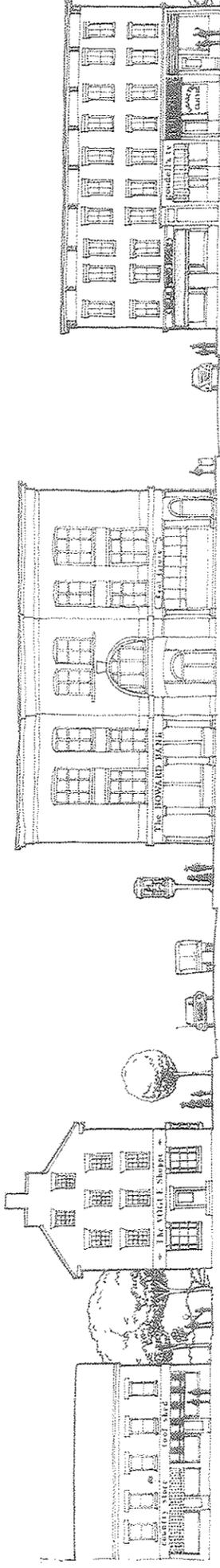


Existing brick walls at ground floor removed
 New storefront constructed
 Glazing system and doors added
 Optional canvas awnings
 Signage on glass

Existing signs located within a lower sign entablature

Signs entablature restored by replacing existing signs with narrower versions
 Entablature at "Bertha Church" rebuilt by removing projecting "box"
 Canvas awning added to "Bertha Church" storefront
 Brick on entire facade cleaned

Elevation of east side of Main Street



and
eased

Aluminum siding removed
Mortar joints repointed, if necessary
Brick cleaned
First floor storefront rebuilt
New bay windows
New brick construction
New door and entryway
New sign entablature

Corner sign removed
New "Howard Bank" sign

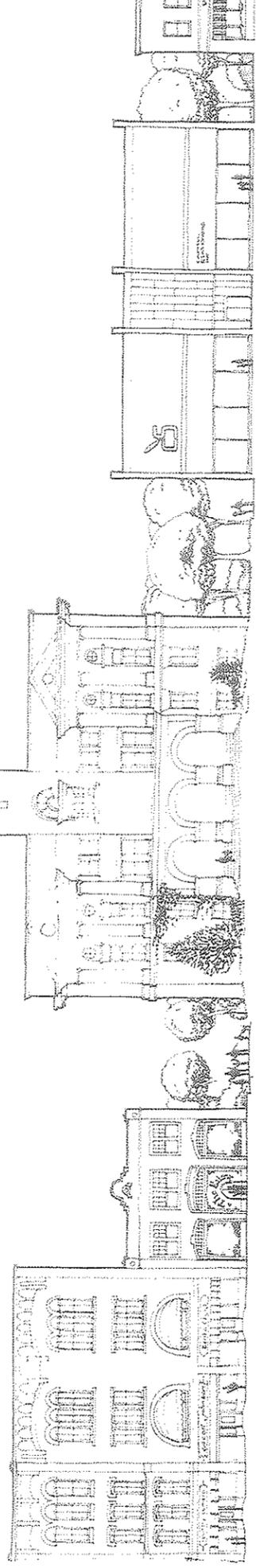
New sign for "Goodell's T.V."
"Oyon River Sports" sign, on south side of
building, repositioned

New sign for "Pacific Finance"

Existing signs removed
New signage within band above glass and below
storefront roof fascia

action
removed

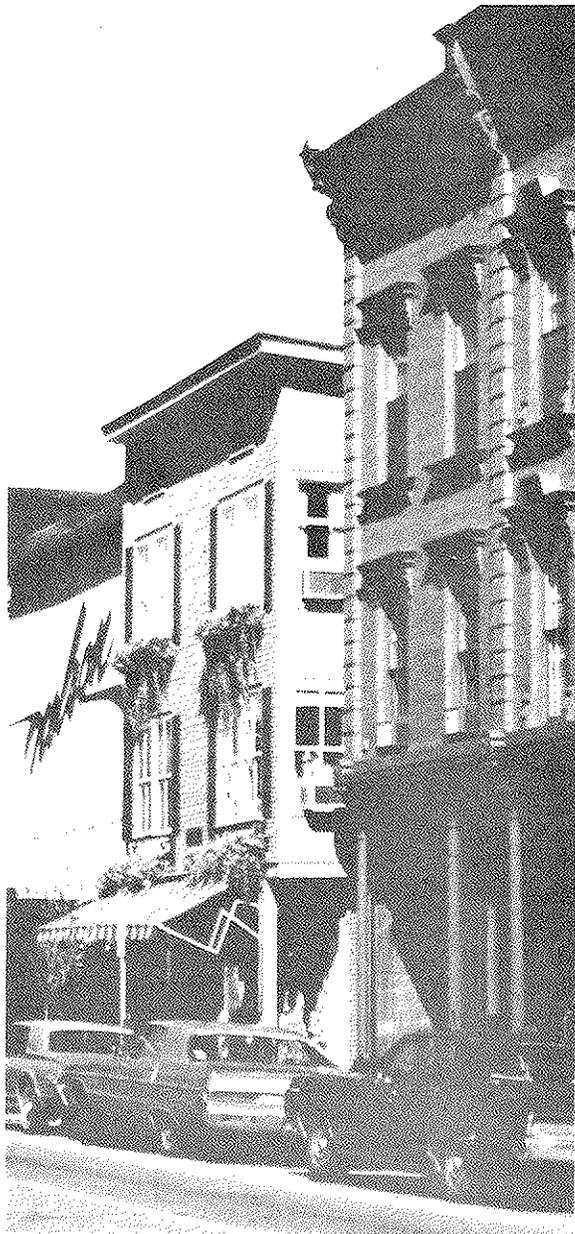
Existing signs removed
New signage within sign entablature
Optional replacement of permanent metal
awning with canvas awning



New sign on glass
First and second floors developed into retail
space
New glazing in old door openings

First floor developed into retail space
Storefront rebuilt
Optional canvas awnings
Planter boxes as part of glazing system
New sign

Sign entablature restored by removing "Western
Auto" sign and replacing with appropriate
signage
Optional canvas awnings
Metal Fascia trim painted to match brick



DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

There are many projects in Montpelier that could be undertaken immediately. It is proposed that four projects be initiated as soon as possible. These projects have been chosen on the basis of apparent need for change and for their immediate impact upon the City. It is anticipated that each successfully completed project in the downtown area will have the effect of encouraging improvements to other properties. In this manner, Montpelier would be making major strides forward toward a revitalized downtown area.

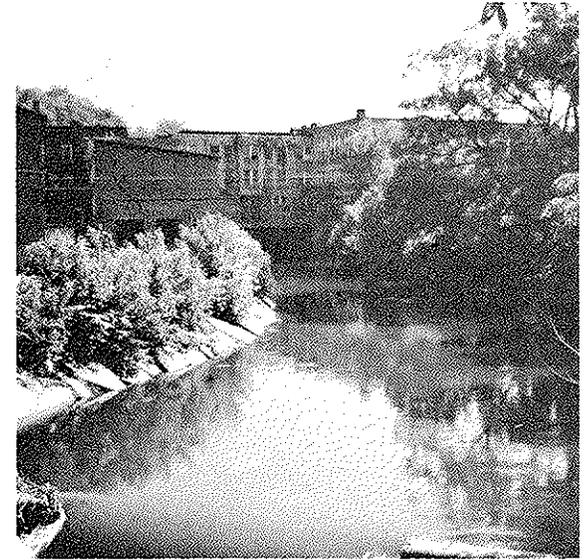
Project #1 - Parking and Open Space

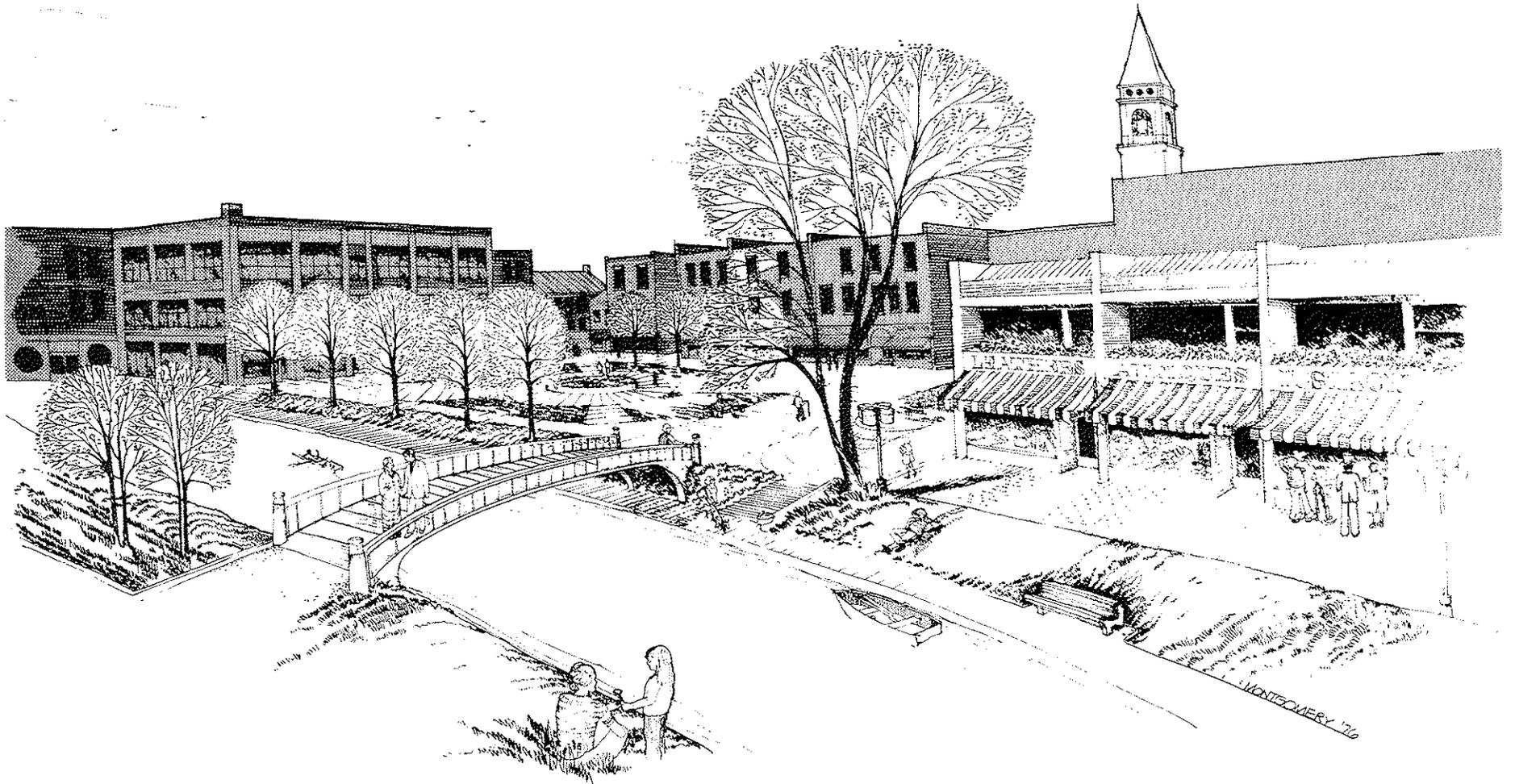
There is a need for public parking in the downtown area. Improved shopping facilities and increased shopper activity will depend heavily on convenient parking spaces. The Phase I plan has proposed that a parking lot be developed by the City on the Fernandez lot behind Christ Church, with its entrance at the end of Elm Street. The concurrent construction of a pedestrian bridge across the North Branch will connect the parking with the main shopping area. A landscaped area would be created behind the Vogue Shop Building and the Frenchs Block and new rear entrances to stores would open onto this area. It is also proposed that the building next to the Vogue Shop, a one story frame building, be taken down to provide a pedestrian way from Main Street into the new landscaped area.

The construction of the parking lot will require the removal of a brick warehouse building and a small concrete garage on the Fernandez lot. It is recommended that the building on State

Street east of Christ Church, the old Miss Montpelier Diner, be retained. This building performs the important functions of being the terminus of the vista along Elm Street, and the end building of the commercial storefronts on the south side of State Street. Removal of this building will surround the church with parking which will result in the church appearing as an island in a parking lot. While this building is in bad repair, it appears to be basically sound and restorable.

A green strip, with trees and planting, will be constructed between the parking and the river's edge. This open space, along with the footbridge across the river and the landscaped area behind the stores, is an important first step in a city-wide open space system.





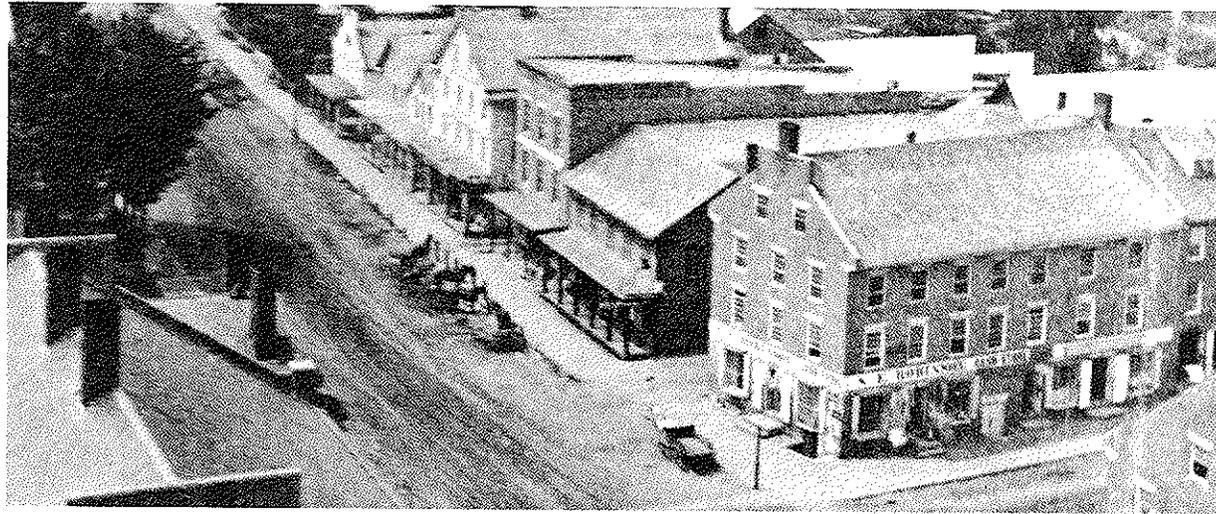
Pedestrian plaza behind southwest corner of State and Main Streets

Project #2 - State-Main Corner

The Vogue Shop Building at the corner of Main and State Streets is a Federal Style brick commercial building, built in the mid 1800's. Until 1963, the building was maintained essentially in its original form and was an outstanding asset to the City. The Vogue Shop Building and three of its neighbors have since been covered with wide metal clapboard siding in what appears to be an attempt to "modernize" this important corner. It is proposed that this corner be undertaken as a demonstration project and the buildings restored to their original condition.

In the Parking and Open Space project, it has been proposed that the building south of the Vogue Shop on Main Street be taken down to provide pedestrian access back to a landscaped area. The next building south along State Street is a one story frame building with a sloping roof. This building is significant because it was probably originally a residence and is one of the few buildings on lower Main Street to survive the 1875 fires. The next building south on Main Street, adjacent to the alley, is a three story brick building. The demonstration project would remove the metal siding from the Vogue Shop Building, the frame building and the brick building next to the alley. It is understood that in the case of all three buildings, that the original building facade exists behind the metal sidings. They should be restored and the storefronts should be redone in conformity. It is suggested also that widening of the Main Street sidewalk in front of these buildings be a part of the project with planting and street furniture elements added. The adjoining sketch illustrates the project recommendations.

The State-Main corner is the main intersection in Montpelier and the most important corner in the City. The restoration of the Vogue Shop and adjacent buildings will have great impact upon the image of Montpelier.





Building at southwest corner of State and Main Streets

Project #3 - Nelson Brothers Hardware

The Nelson Brothers Building is a wood structure built in the early 1800's which, because of its location on the North Branch, survived the 1875 fires. It is thought to be the second oldest building standing today in Montpelier. Over the years the storefront and the roof have been modified, but most of the original building is intact beneath the present corrugated metal siding. It is proposed that the Nelson Brothers Building be restored to its original condition and extended to the east to fill the opening next to Brown Insurance.

Because of this building's location on the river, it is important to restore the west elevation as well as the street elevation. Approaching from the west along State Street, Nelson Brothers is seen as a corner building, with the west elevation having considerable prominence and offering further identification potential for the owners. As the proposed open space system is expanded and the walkway is constructed along the river with access from State Street, the west elevation of the building will gain even more importance.

The open space next to Brown Insurance, the result of an unfortunate fire, will be used for expansion of the Nelson Brothers store. Since the expanded building will house one function, it is proposed that the original building design be simply expanded into that space, as the old photograph of the building indicates was once the case.





Looking east on State Street

Project #4 - Montpelier Streetscape

It is proposed that a concerted effort begin to implement the streetscape recommendations in terms of building facades and street amenity. The demonstration projects outlined above are important first steps that can and should be undertaken immediately. The successful completion of any of these projects hopefully will encourage other building owners to do similar projects.

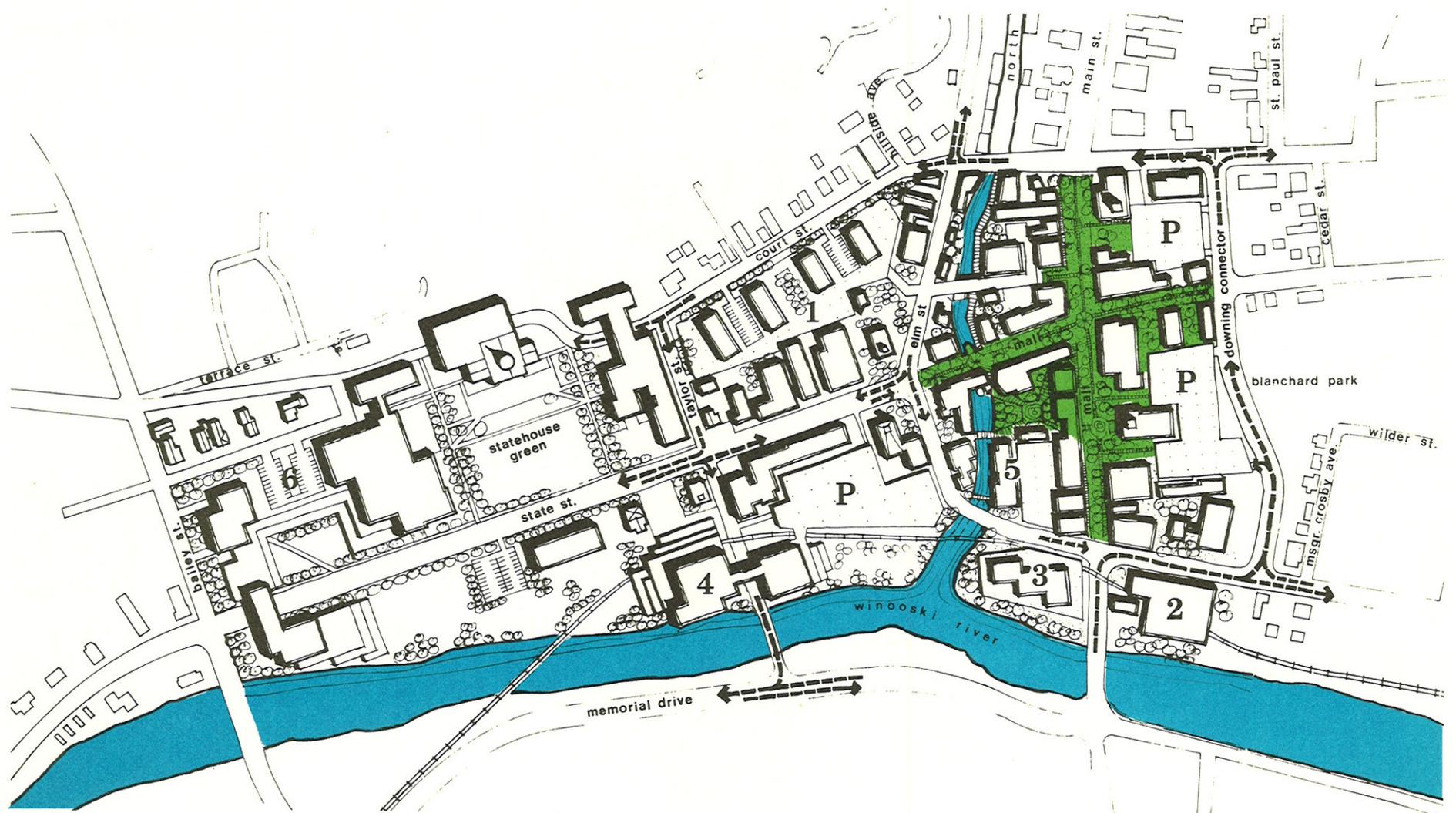
Many of the improvements suggested for downtown are things that must be done by the City in conjunction with building owners. The enforcement of a reasonable sign ordinance would go a long way toward improving the appearance of the Central Business District. As the public parking situation improves, it has been suggested that sidewalks in certain areas be widened and street furniture elements added. This would have to be undertaken by the City with the shop owners possibly contributing toward the work. Improvements in street lighting have been suggested and this also becomes a City responsibility.

The accompanying sketch indicates what a portion of Main Street might look like with improvements made to buildings, storefronts and sidewalk areas.





Looking north on Main Street



Master Plan

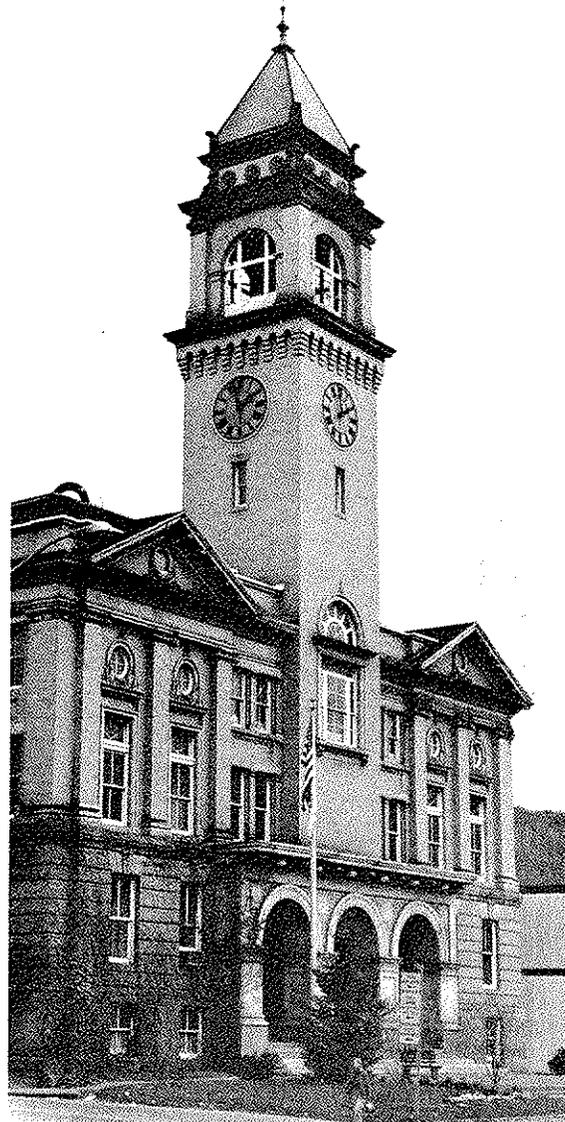


- 1 - New office and housing (parking under)
- 2 - Car-related commercial
- 3 - Motel
- 4 - Convention and Arts Center
- 5 - New commercial
- 6 - State office expansion (parking under)

MASTER PLAN

The master plan deals primarily with the Central Business District and suggests directions for future development in the downtown area. Vermont College and residential areas are not shown because there are no long-range plan recommendations for those areas. The intent of the plan is to show that when a series of logical steps are followed over a period of time, long range goals can be achieved. Plans of course change as attitudes change, therefore, it is not expected that Montpelier will one day look exactly like it appears here. However, it is anticipated that the goals of improving vehicular circulation through town, providing convenient parking, and creating a pedestrian emphasis will remain valid and increase in importance in the future. As the pressure for change increases in Montpelier, it is hoped that this master plan will be a useful guide. The plan consists of the following elements:

Land Use: The major blocks in the downtown area are clearly defined according to function. The Capitol Complex has a definite boundary and function. The area between State and Court Streets, adjacent to the Capitol Complex, has primarily Federal-office functions. The area directly south of this, between State Street and the Winooski, has primarily a hotel-motel function. The four major blocks around the State-Main intersection are clearly commercial, and the remainder of the Design Control District is residential. This exist-



ing land use pattern seems to work reasonably well and it is the intention of the master plan to reinforce and strengthen this pattern.

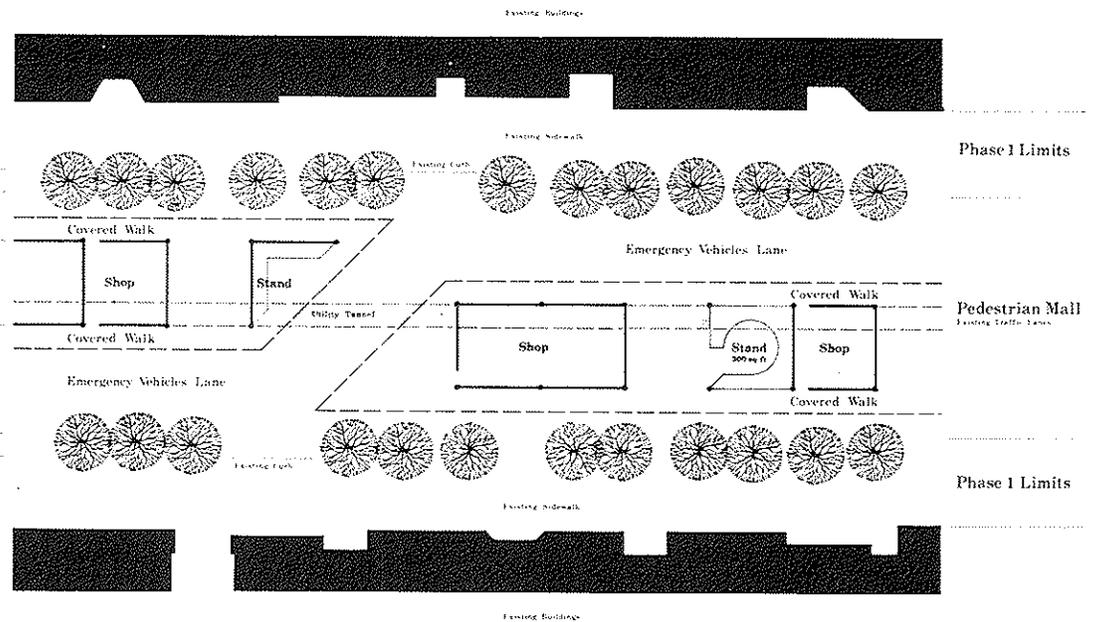
Traffic and Parking:

The key to long range improvements in Montpelier is a solution to basic traffic and parking problems. The master plan proposes a traffic loop system around the downtown area with parking structures along the loop. Along with improvements to Court and School Streets, a new street is proposed between Barre and School Streets, partially on the alignment of Downing Street, to create a loop around the State-Main intersection. This loop, along with a proposed traffic loop around the Capitol Complex, would solve traffic congestion in the central city.

The parking needs of the shopping area can be met by providing parking structures along the traffic loop, with convenient access from covered parking to stores and shops. The best locations for these structures are behind City Hall, behind the Bethany Church, along Court Street behind First Federal, behind the Tavern Motor Inn, and in an area at the west end of Barre Street.

Pedestrians: The creation of a traffic loop around the Central Business District with associated parking, eliminates the need for traffic through the State-Main intersection. Portions of Main and State Streets can then be closed and the streets devoted to pedestrian activity. Vehicular access for parking and service would be at the back of buildings, and it is proposed that the center of the existing streets become a linear structure of small shops and covered walkways. The shops will financially support the structure and the walkways will afford weather protection for pedestrians throughout the year. The remainder of the street would consist of planting, paving, benches and other street furniture elements to create the pedestrian mall indicated on the adjoining sketch.

New Uses: Many upper floors of commercial buildings along State and Main Streets stand empty at the present time. As interest is renewed in downtown Montpelier, and economic activity increases, this space will once again be in demand. With improvements to the buildings internally, such as plumbing and more importantly elevators, these 2nd and 3rd floors would make ideal office



Pedestrian Mall Plan

and apartment space. Quality apartments downtown can greatly benefit the vitality of the City by providing activity on the street both during the day and in the evening. Varied other functions will be attracted to floors above the storefronts and this is to be encouraged as an important ingredient in the revitalization of downtown.

New Construction: The parking structures would be major new construction in the City and it is proposed that other new functions can be associated with these buildings. The edges of parking structures can be developed as commercial space, and this is proposed behind City Hall and along the North Branch behind the Frenchs Block. The area at the confluence of the Winooski and the North Branch is a good location for a motel, particularly as related to a proposed convention center on Taylor Street. At the intersection of Main and Barre Streets is a piece of land cut off from the mall area by the traffic loop. It is proposed that some automobile related function take place on this property.

The other major new construction, apart from the Capitol Complex, would be office and housing blocks built atop the parking structure fronting on Court Street. Because of the terrain, the top of the parking structure is a landscaped deck at the level of Court Street, with the new buildings sitting on the deck. They would be oriented so as not to block view and sun from the houses above Court Street and would contain offices and/or housing as the need dictated. These functions are consistent with the present functional use

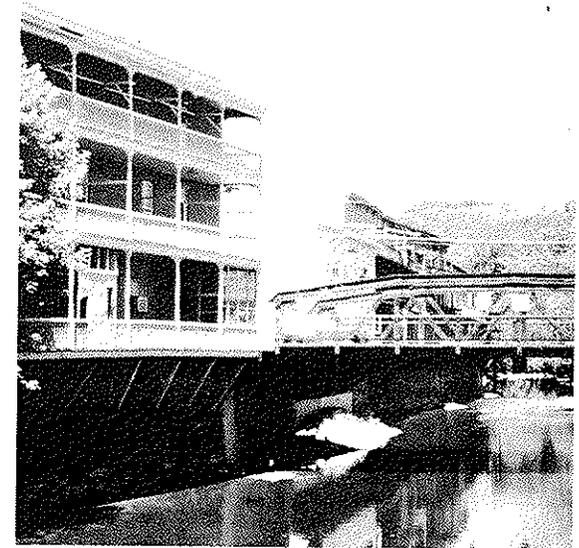
of the area.

It is expected that other new construction will take place downtown through normal attrition. These projects will most likely be individual infill buildings.

Rivers:

The open space system initiated in the Phase I Plan is fully developed in the master plan. The walkway along the North Branch extends from behind the Frenchs Block past the Lane Company into the countryside. With the system completed through town, it would be possible to walk or bike from Hubbard Park down through the Statehouse Green to the north bank of the Winooski, then along the Winooski to the North Branch, and up the North Branch. As one proceeds through the downtown area, there would be various opportunities to reach street level or newly created pedestrian spaces behind existing buildings. Once through downtown, it would be possible to connect back into Hubbard Park or residential neighborhoods.

It is intended that the river walk provide an alternative pedestrian route through town that takes maximum advantage of an important natural resource. The walkway itself would be below

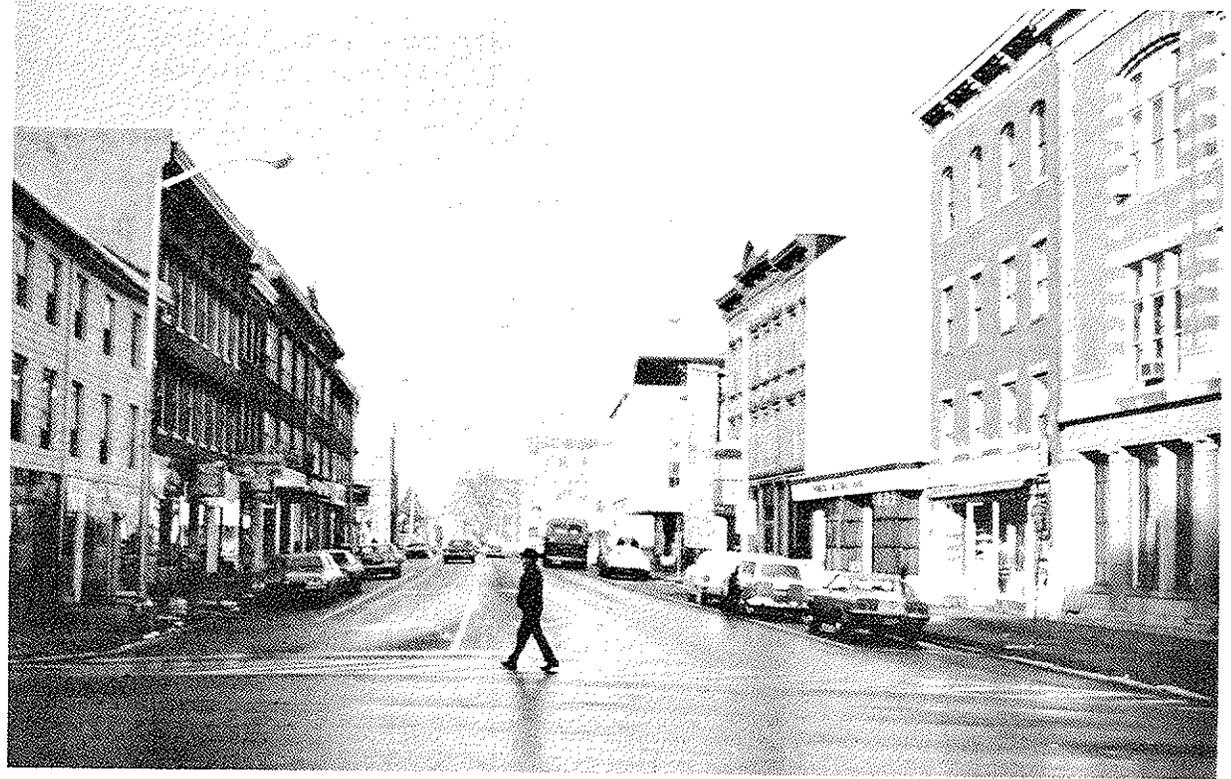


street level so access can be gained to the water for boating and skating, and so that people can pass under existing street bridges. The river walkway will add a new dimension to Montpelier and a chance to experience the natural setting of the City from a new vantage point. The use of the water itself for recreational activities in all seasons will add much needed activity to the City.

Phases: The Phase I Plan proposed changes to Montpelier that can be undertaken immediately. As these changes begin to take place, it is expected that pressures for increased parking will be felt along with a demand for more commercial space.

Phase II: In Phase II, surface parking lots will be replaced with parking structures which can include new commercial floor space. Phase II developments of this type obviously will require a major City effort. The increased capacity of parking structures will reduce the need for parallel parking on main streets and will enable sidewalks to be widened in more locations with further pedestrian amenities.

Phase III: Phases I and II, with a more attractive downtown and easier parking, will tend to increase both economic activity and traffic. The final phase in committing the Cityscape Masterplan will be to construct the one-way traffic loop around the downtown area and make Main and State Streets a totally pedestrian shopping area.





Pedestrian Mall