

JEFFERSON AREA COMMUNITY PLAN

**An Urban Design Plan and Implementation Recommendations
For
The West Jefferson Boulevard Commercial Area
In
Oak Cliff - Dallas, Texas**

Executive Summary

Prepared For:

JEFFERSON AREA ASSOCIATION

and

CITY OF DALLAS

Prepared By:

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and

ARCHITEXAS

August, 1990

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan has been funded by a Community Development Block Grant from the City of Dallas for the 1988-89 and 1989-90 budget years.

While the participants in this plan have been numerous, the *Jefferson Area Association Board* has played the strongest leadership role. They have given many hours to the project to review and critique and offer suggestion. In particular *Kelly Bishop*, President of the Board, and *Laura Mulry*, Executive Director, have been extremely helpful in moving the project forward. Board members *Steve Elwell*, *Lonnie Goodman*, *Danell Lichtenwalter*, *Susan Teegardin* and *Joe Whitney* took a strong interest in the plan and provided many hours of their time in meetings.

David Callahan, Senior Planner of the Dallas Department of Planning and Development was the project director for the City and has spent a considerable amount of time in reviewing and offering suggestions, and coordinating meetings and hearings. *Ron Underwood* of the Department of Public Works, spent many hours providing invaluable technical expertise to the project.

We also wish to thank *Ruth Chenoweth* for providing historic background and photographs and time spent at many project meetings.

The members of the consultant planning team were:

Tom Niederauer & Associates

Tom Niederauer - served as overall manager for the project
Kate Singleton - historic research and economic development

ArchiTexas

Craig Melde - served as partner in charge of the project
Gary Skotnicki - architect and chief urban designer
Kerry Freeman - provided most of the map drafting

JEFFERSON AREA COMMUNITY PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. SUMMARY

The plan for revitalization of the West Jefferson Boulevard commercial area is based largely on issues and goals that were established by the community at the outset of the project. Since many revitalization tools are already in place at the City of Dallas, the planners sought ways to organize the community to utilize those tools (implementation), and for the City to respond with appropriate capital improvements. The centerpiece recommendations of this plan are:

To organize the Jefferson Area Association (JAA) to encourage property owners, to implement the recommendations, and to coordinate appropriate programs with the City of Dallas;

To pursue designation of the area as a local historic district, and listing on the National Register of Historic Places;

To define a program for capital improvements to renovate public spaces, provide compatible street furniture and increase the level of street lighting throughout the area;

To design mechanisms for the JAA and the City of Dallas to retain and upgrade existing businesses and attract new ones.

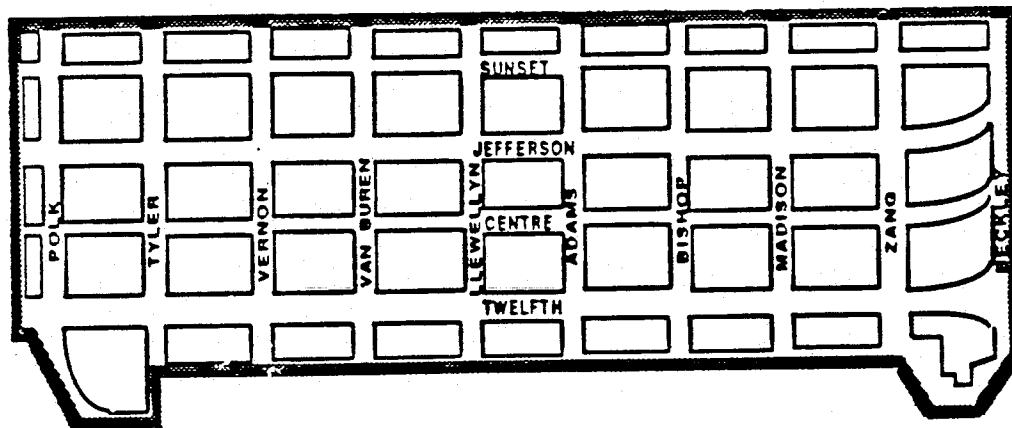
II. BACKGROUND

II.A - Project Purpose

The purpose of the project is to prepare a plan to revitalize the West Jefferson Boulevard area. The plan includes physical development guidelines to renovate both public and private properties, as well as concepts to fund and implement the recommendations.

II.B - Project Boundaries and Context

As indicated below, the general boundaries of the planning area are the properties along Twelfth Street on the south, Sunset Street on the north, Beckley Avenue on the east and Polk Street on the west.



Planning Area Boundaries

The planning area is over one mile in length, and encompasses approximately forty-eight city blocks. The ten-block length of Jefferson Boulevard has been the primary commercial center of north Oak Cliff for over 100 years. During that time, there have been several periods of development that have left a rich historical legacy reflected in the remaining commercial buildings.

The district is located about two miles south-west of downtown Dallas along R. L. Thornton Freeway (IH-35), and is near important area uses such as the Dallas Zoo, Methodist Medical Center and facilities for both Dallas County and the City of Dallas. This district is surrounded on three sides by residential neighborhoods, most of which are stable and are being restored.

II.C - Previous Planning

This *Jefferson Area Community Plan* is a follow-up to previous plans that have been completed over the last five years. The City of Dallas produced the *North Oak Cliff Land Use and Development Guide* in 1986 which recommended general zoning, land use and revitalization strategies for the area. In 1987-88, the City of Dallas assembled a group of merchants, owners and neighbors to prepare the *Jefferson Area Land Use and Revitalization Plan* which became a conceptual plan that led to the *Zoning Transition Plan* for the area completed in the summer of 1989. The 1988 plan also recommended hiring an executive director for the JAA and set the framework for this plan.

In 1988, the JAA prepared a request for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to hire a director and contract for detailed planning services. The request was approved, the director was hired in the spring of 1989, and this plan begun shortly thereafter.

II.D - Planning Process

The project to create the Jefferson Area Community Plan has been conducted over an eleven month period beginning in September, 1989, and consists of five phases:

Phase One - Meetings were conducted with the community and City Staff members to collect facts, identify common needs, define pertinent issues and create a project mission statement.

Phase Two - The second step was to identify historic and other resources and to analyze the built fabric in the area, such as land uses, building and street conditions, and to evaluate other issues that impact implementation, such as security, maintenance, current zoning, and the organization of the JAA.

Phase Three - This phase consisted of preparing design, organizational, and funding concepts that utilized the resources of the area and met the mission statement.

Phase Four - This phase included finalizing all recommendations and presenting them to the public at community meetings.

Phase Five - This final phase includes presenting the recommendations to the City Plan Commission and City Council for adoption.

I.I.E - Issues

For ultimate implementation, the most important part of any plan is the ownership of the plan. This is achieved by allowing and encouraging the community to define its own issues, assist in finding the best solutions and design a plan that meets the community's needs and abilities.

The process for determining pertinent community issues to be addressed by the planners entailed the following steps:

- * *Research of previous documentation and plans, and an analysis of the results of those plans;*
- * *Personal interviews with key community leaders and City Staff;*
- * *Questionnaire style surveys of owners, merchants and neighbors;*
- * *"Town hall" meetings with people in the community and City Staff.*

The issues that resulted from this process varied widely, but several became obvious as those that could be dealt with in this planning process. The primary issues defined by the community were:

- * *Lack of follow-through on recommendations from previous plans;*
- * *Owner-tenant apathy toward participation and change;*
- * *Poor maintenance of both public and private areas;*
- * *Lack of visual continuity of the streetscape and lack of "good" design of storefronts and signs;*
- * *Crime, poor street lighting, and feelings of a lack of personal safety;*
- * *Quality and selection of merchandise available.*

II.F - Community Goals and Mission Statement

During community meetings to define issues, certain broad goals were established that served as a starting point for undertaking the planning process. The goals are:

- * *Beautify the area to raise the level of community pride and attract clientele;*
- * *Provide for increased job opportunities;*
- * *Revive the historic presence of the area and bring back the trolley;*
- * *Preserve the cultural diversity of the area, but broaden the market and bring in higher grade retail and restaurant variety;*
- * *Determine how to serve the immediate neighborhood and corporate market and then develop the tourism market.*

To prepare a plan that encompasses the above goals and utilizes the resources in the area, the community planning participants and consultants created the following project *Mission Statement* for guidance:

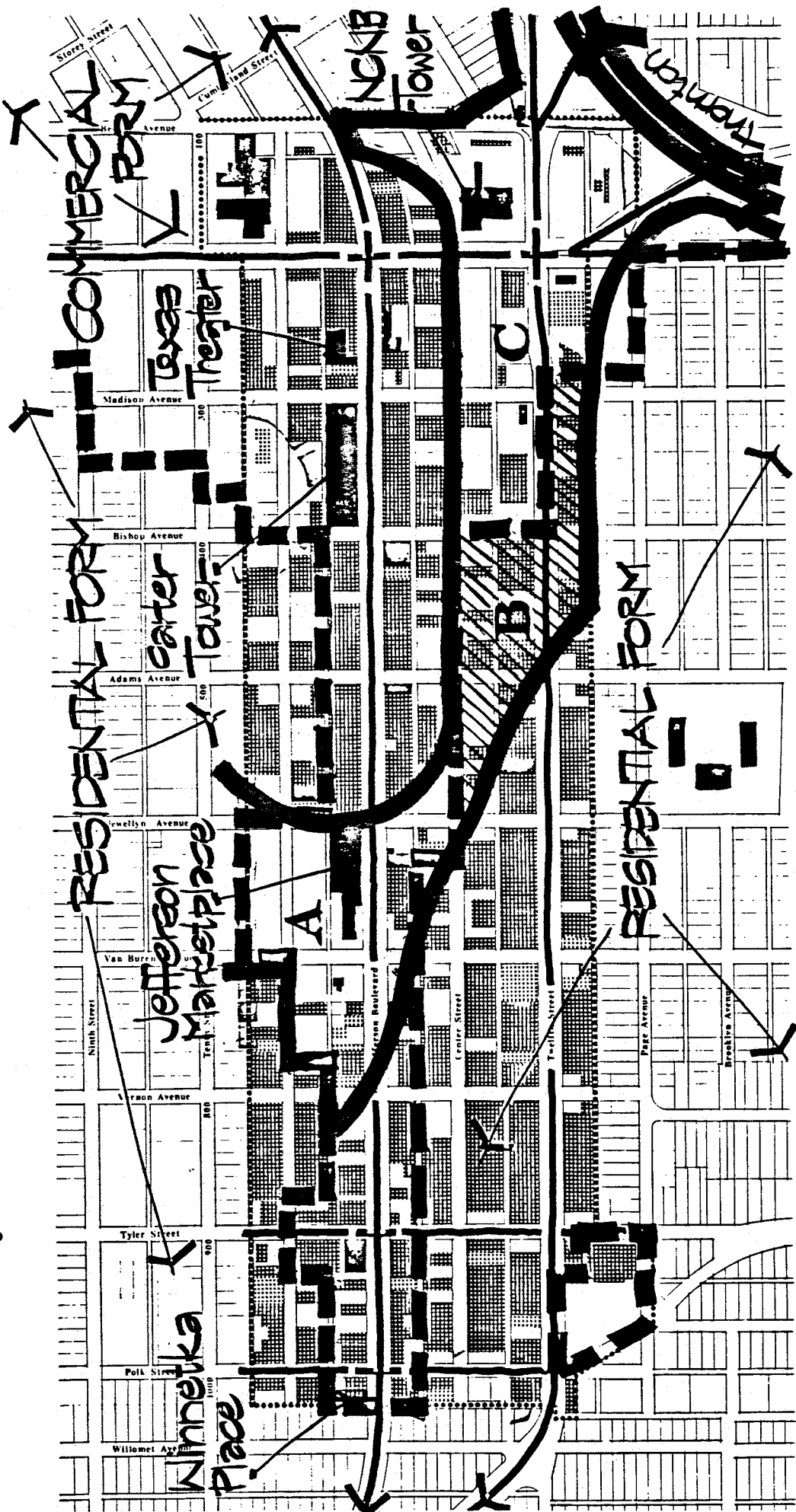
"To maximize the vitality of the Jefferson Boulevard area business district by expanding the market range and cultural diversity of the center, promoting historic preservation as a tool for economic development; creating new jobs and a renewed image as downtown Oak Cliff."

II.G - Findings and Analysis

The primary findings of the analysis of existing conditions revealed that there are more than 400 buildings in the area, many of which would qualify for historic designation. Overall, 95 percent of the buildings are in good to excellent structural condition, however, many of the facades are in need of restoration and many signs are in need of replacement. Existing streets, sidewalks and alleys are in average to poor condition. Of 78 street segments evaluated, only five (7 percent) were rated as being in good to excellent condition. These factors provide a strong basis for public and private renovation programs.

The research of the historical development periods of the area provided understanding of the unusual development patterns as expressed on the "*Subdistricting Analysis*" map on the following page. The break in the built fabric indicated as areas "A", "B" and "C", is a long term impact from the trolley line that once existed in the area. The steam train, and later, the trolley caused this area to redevelop from residential to commercial uses over a period of time. These areas however, were the last to develop for commercial uses and many vacant lots remain. This break in the building fabric, however, provides for opportunities for plazas and new development. The rich historical information also was used to develop other redevelopment and design recommendations.

The evaluation of security and maintenance potentials, current zoning, and the operation of the JAA provided data needed to devise a workable implementation program. While the JAA has been aggressive in providing member services, it has lacked the tools and professional expertise to seek new development potential and to encourage more participation from property owners.



J E F F E R S O N A R E A C O M M U N I T Y P L A N

FOR THE

JEFFERSON AREA

Jefferson
ASSOCIATION

SUBDISTRICTING
ANALYSIS

Tom
Niederbauer
AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITEXAS

- Building Type Boundary
- Potential Infill Zone



DATE: _____ REVISIONS: _____

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

III.A - Overall Revitalization Concept

The proposed concept for revitalization of the West Jefferson Boulevard area is to reinforce the "community" relationship of the Jefferson commercial area to the surrounding neighborhoods and to provide leadership in directing renovation and business revitalization efforts. The *physical design recommendations* for rebuilding public spaces (streets, alleys and sidewalks), and guidelines for storefront renovation efforts are based on historic architectural development periods. The proposed economic development programs and the *implementation recommendations* are based on increasing the membership and responsibilities of the JAA. The key concepts of this plan are:

Organize the JAA to undertake the primary leadership role in plan implementation, provide business services, attract new businesses and include others in the process;

Utilize historic resources for community image and economic advantage;

Renovate building storefronts;

Renovate most streets and sidewalks, and add street lighting throughout;

Upgrade and attract businesses, and begin aggressive marketing;

Coordinate all funding processes for maximum efficiency;

Prepare an incremental plan with "doable" projects.

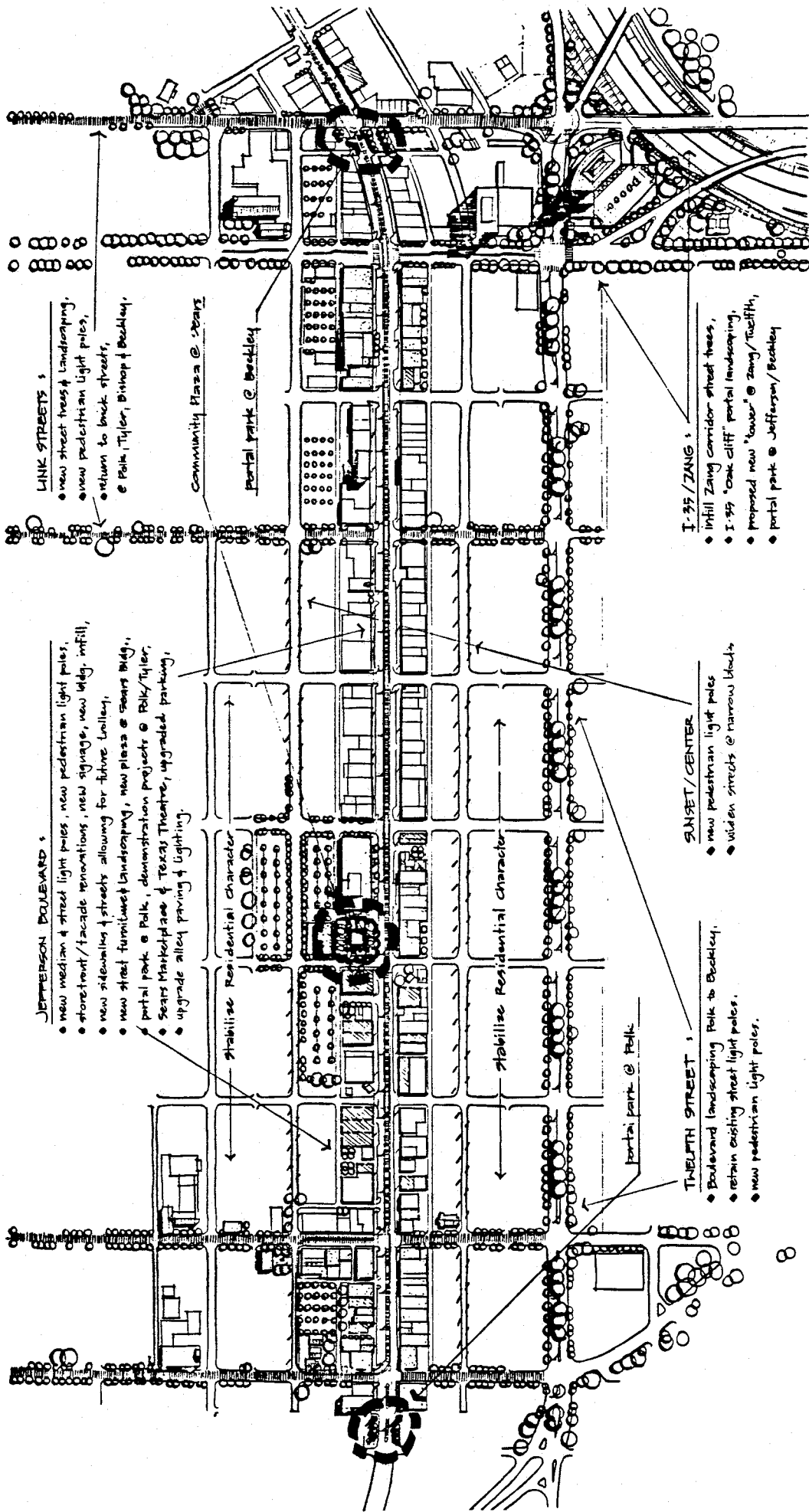
III.B - Design & Redevelopment Concepts

As mentioned above, the recommendations for rebuilding both the public (streets) and private (storefronts) spaces are based on historic preservation. Included are recommendations to nominate the area to the National Register of Historic Places and to pursue local historic designation to provide restoration-architectural guidelines. Both processes result in tax incentives and are a means to improve the image of the area.

The building design recommendations included in this section are intended to provide an overall complementary built environment for reinvigorating the district. The recommendations for rebuilding the streets and sidewalks do not include designs for enhanced paving and considerably more street trees; rather, the priorities should be to provide a new "*clean*" public right-of-way built to current City of Dallas standards to stimulate renovations of the historic building storefronts, and a new signature street light.

The philosophy in recommending streetscape elements is for designs with an "*urban*" character that improve the appearance of the street and fit well with the three primary architectural periods reflected along Jefferson as well as the other streets. The building design guidelines are prepared to reclaim and enhance the original character of the buildings in the area, and to provide for compatible new construction.

In summary, the physical redevelopment guidelines establish a framework for the renovation of building storefronts and signs through historic preservation. The following "*Key Concepts*" illustration provides an overview of many of the improvements recommended for the Jefferson area. Highlights of some of the specific recommendations follow on the next pages.



JEFFERSON BOULEVARD :

- new median & street light poles, new pedestrian light poles,
- storefront/facade renovations, new signage, new wldg. infill,
- new sidewalks & streets allowing for future Infill,
- new street furniture & landscaping, new plaza @ Sears Bldg.,
- portal park @ Polk, demonstration projects @ Polk/Tyler,
- Sears Marketplace & Texas Theatre, upgraded parking,
- upgrade alley paving & lighting.

LINK STREETS :

- new street trees & landscaping,
- new pedestrian light poles,
- return to block streets,
- Polk, Tyler, Bishop & Beckley,

Stabilize Residential character

Stabilize Residential character

TWELFTH STREET :

- Boulevard landscaping Polk to Beckley,
- retain existing street light poles,
- new pedestrian light poles.

SUNSET/CENTER

- new pedestrian light poles
- widen streets @ narrow blocks

I-35/ZANG :

- Infill Zang corridor street trees,
- I-35 "oak cliff" portal landscaping,
- proposed new "lower" @ Zang/Twelfth,
- portal park @ Jefferson/Beckley

J E F F E R S O N A R E A C O M M U N I T Y P L A N

FOR THE
JEFFERSON AREA ASSOCIATION
Jefferson
 ASSOCIATION

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KEY CONCEPTS

DATE: REVISIONS:

III.B - Design & Redevelopment Concepts (continued)

Provide A New Street Light Design on Jefferson

The recommended stylistic street light for the Jefferson Boulevard median would be complementary to the architectural styles, provide a strong "*signature*" design element, and enhance the quality of light along the street. It is recommended that the lights be placed the length of Jefferson from Polk on the west to Lancaster on the east. They eventually could be extended to the Jefferson Viaduct to unify the whole length of Jefferson Boulevard. The drawings on page 13 illustrate the design concepts for street lighting and furniture.

Provide Pedestrian Scale Historic Street Lights

Additional pedestrian scale lighting should be provided on all other streets, cross streets, link streets and along the sidewalks on Jefferson. The historic *acorn top* light now in use in the 200 to 400 blocks of Jefferson should be used. This distinctive twelve foot light will provide a much higher overall light level and will aid in countering security problems which are a major issue in the area.

New Compatible Street Furniture on Jefferson

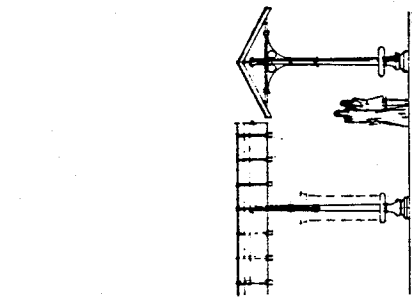
The street furniture elements and landscaping should have the same high quality emphasis that is placed on the street and building renovations. This street furniture should be urban in styling and have classic design appeal which is complementary to all the architectural styles along Jefferson, and to the street light designs. The recommendations are for a "*family*" of items with complementary design details. While the designs and criteria are intended for Jefferson Boulevard, the furniture should be used throughout the area to provide a cohesive design image for the district.

III.B - Design & Redevelopment Concepts (continued)

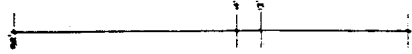
Rebuild Streets to City Standards

Since many of the streets, sidewalks and alleys in the area are in disrepair, it is recommended that all but a few be rebuilt and/or repaired within the next five years. Some of the recommendations along Jefferson will require some street rebuilding anyway, and the timing for these improvements should be coordinated. The public space design concept for this plan emphasizes the high priority of the street light as the strongest unifying element. To contrast that priority (and expenditure), expensive enhancement of the public spaces is not recommended. The added expense of street lighting for the district can be offset by not including brick crosswalks and sidewalks, and extensive landscaping throughout the district.

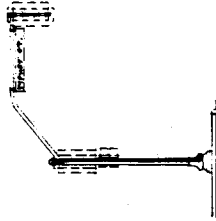
The design concept for the Jefferson median is to recreate a flat surface with no curbs, reminiscent of the space that existed when the street car was in use. With brick and low level landscape treatment, this concept provides for clear viewing across the boulevard, does not detract from the street light design, and will require little maintenance.



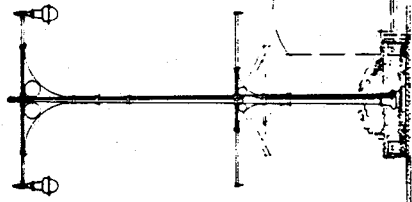
TROLLEY SHELTER



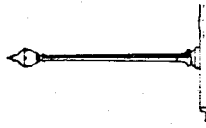
TRAFFIC SIGNAL POLE



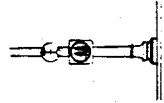
MEDIAN LIGHT/TROLLEY POLE



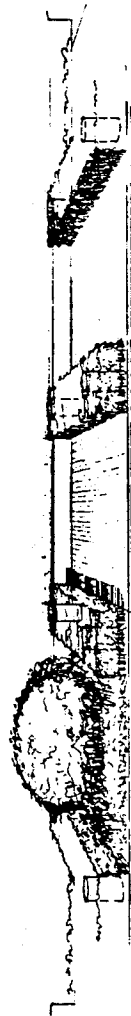
PEDESTRIAN LIGHT POLE



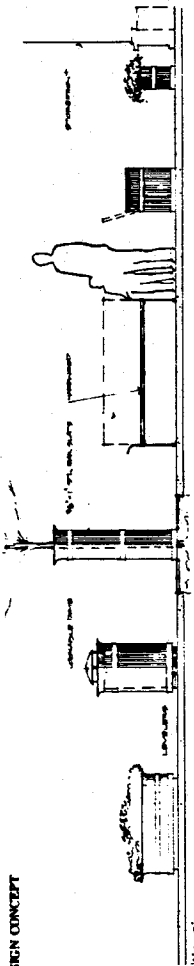
KIOSK POLE



PEDESTRIAN DISTRICT SIGN



MEDIAN DESIGN CONCEPT



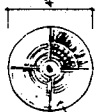
SIDEWALK PLAQUE



DRAIN GRELLE



TREE GRATE



ROUND PLANTER

TRASH BIN

TREE GUARD

BENCH

LINEAR PLANTER

J E F F E R S O N A R E A C O M M U N I T Y P L A N

FOR THE

JEFFERSON AREA



Tom Niederauer AND ASSOCIATES

ARCHITEXAS

ARCHITEXAS ASSOCIATION, INC. 1000 W. WASHINGTON ST. SUITE 1000 DALLAS, TEXAS 75201

PUBLIC STREET ELEMENTS

III.B - Design & Redevelopment Concepts (continued)

Architectural and Sign Guidelines

The design guidelines, some of which are illustrated on the following page, are prepared as a means to assist property owners in the renovation of their buildings. They also are to provide general guidance for the design of new buildings on vacant property so the end result is complementary to existing buildings in the area. These guidelines should be utilized as the basis for the design criteria that normally is included in the ordinance for historic designation.

Community Plazas and Landscaping

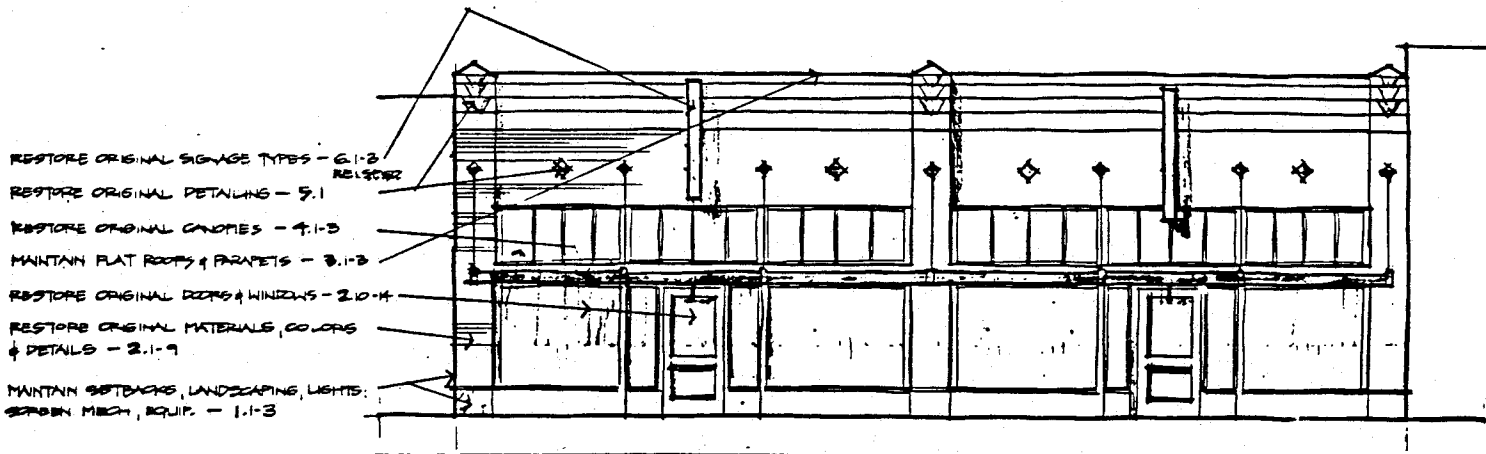
Two plazas are recommended along Jefferson as public gathering spaces and to provide large groupings of trees. The largest plaza, illustrated on the page 16, is at Van Buren at the west end of the Sears (Jefferson Marketplace) Building. This plaza would include a pavilion for food service and community activities, and would serve as the central public gathering place along Jefferson. The smaller plaza would be at Beckley to form a central focal point between East and West Jefferson.

Enhance and Add Street Lights on "Link" Streets

To encourage physical linkages into and out of the district, it is recommended that certain streets be landscaped and lighted. Polk, Tyler, Bishop, and Beckley are all important north-south streets with destinations beyond Jefferson. By providing additional street trees, removing asphalt to reveal brick streets, and adding pedestrian-scale street lights, pedestrian and auto traffic will be encouraged into the area. The link streets are identified on the "*Key Concepts*" drawing on page 10.



NEW INFILL FACADE

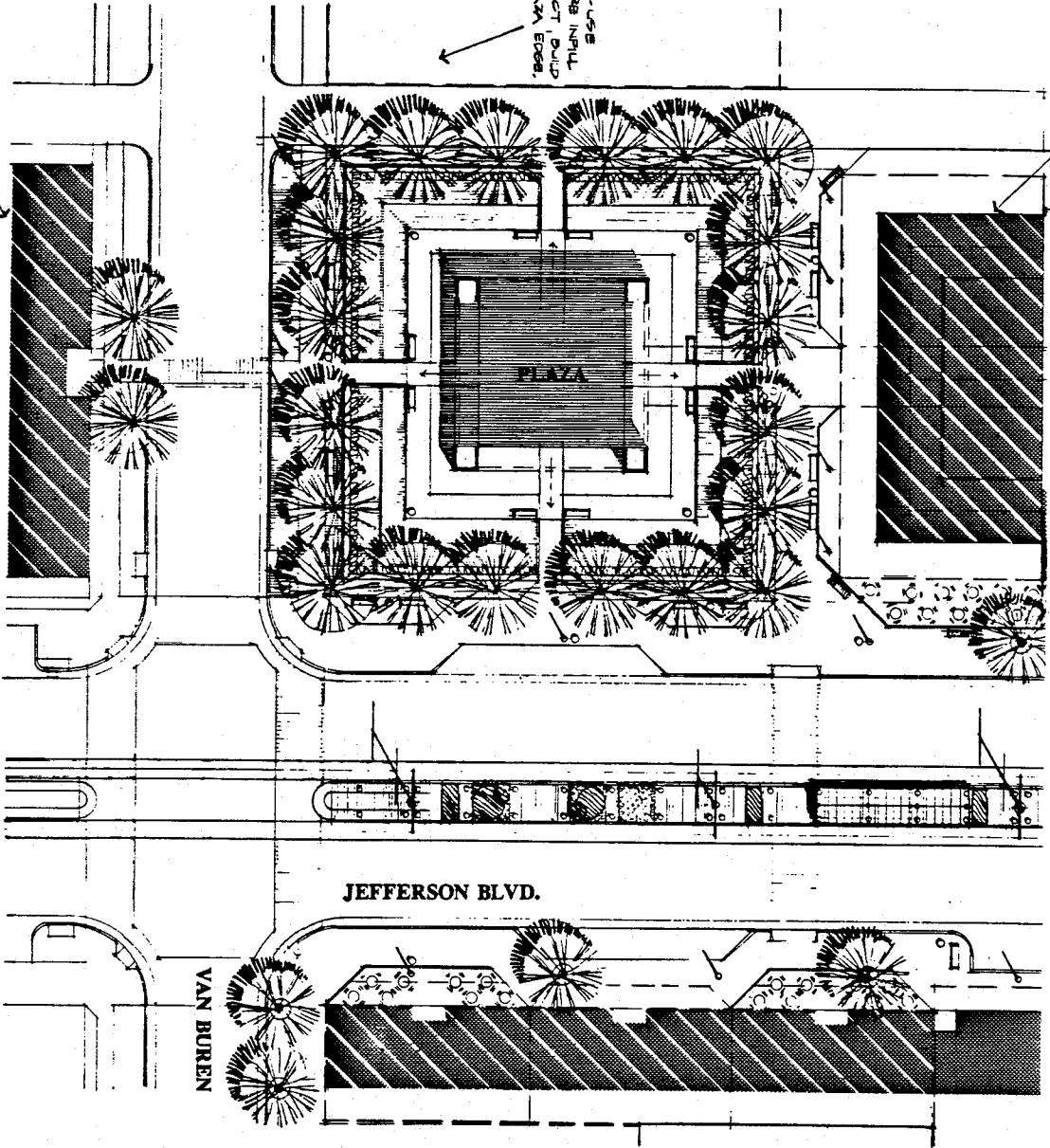


TYPICAL COMMERCIAL FACADE

BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

MIXED-USE
PROJECTS INfill
PROJECT, BUILD TO
ADJ. SITES/USES

MIXED-USE
FUTURE INfill
PROJECT, BUILD
TO PLAZA EDGE,



SEARS / MARKETPLACE PLAZA

III.C - Implementation Concepts

The implementation of the plan will take time, money and the efforts of many people with an interest in the revitalization. The following recommendations are oriented toward upgrading the physical environment and existing businesses, as well as attracting new ones to the area.

Restructure the JAA

To implement the recommended programs, several JAA committees are suggested. Owner, Merchant and User committees will run the activities of the association, while special committees will be formed for special functions.

Prepare a Business Plan

The JAA should use the recommendations in this plan as a starting point for preparing a business plan. This plan should include tasks to be accomplished over time to build a successful record.

Designate Historic District

Since 83 percent of the 486 buildings in the historic building analysis area would qualify, the City and the JAA should pursue the designation of the area as a local historic district and its placement on the National Register of Historic Places. These would provide tax incentives and allow architectural guidelines to assure quality renovations. The historic building analysis area is larger than the planning area (see National Register Boundary map on the following page).

Establish a Storefront Renovation Program

As a service to Jefferson area owners and merchants, such a program could provide low interest loans to encourage more timely and better quality renovations of buildings.

Provide Business Services

As a merchant and property owner organization, the JAA should provide services to existing businesses such as merchandising seminars and common marketing. For property owners, the association should begin an aggressive business attraction program.



JEFFERSON AREA COMMUNITY PLAN

LEGEND

- BOUNDARY LINE
- CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS
- NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS
- VACANT
- TEXT KEY

JEFFERSON AREA
Jefferson
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NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT BOUNDARY



DATE: 5/10/90 REVISIONS:

III.D - Funding Concepts

The proposals for funding the recommendations are based on a public-private initiative. Some projects should be funded by the City, some by property owners and others with a financial interest in the area, and some should be shared. While the renovation of the area will take place over a long period of time, and will ultimately be funded from many different sources, there are three sources that will provide the bulk of the funding.

Capital Improvements

The renovation of all public spaces should be funded from a City of Dallas capital improvement (bond) program. This will include street repaving programs, sidewalk and alley reconstruction, and the purchase of new street lights and new street furniture. It also may include the funding of plazas and some landscaping.

Private Investment

Although some low interest loans and tax incentives may be available, property owners and merchants will be responsible for storefront renovations, and for new signs and window displays. Costs for land and construction of new parking lots also will be borne by property owners.

Administrative Costs

The expense of maintaining an office for the JAA, staff salaries, and business service and attraction programs will be shared by the City of Dallas, property owners and merchants, and other members of the association. Funding will come primarily from Community Development Block Grants and a Public Improvement District. However, corporate gifts and foundation grants also should be sought for supplemental funding.

IV. - NEXT STEPS

After adoption of the plan by the Dallas City Council, the final report with all technical recommendations will be published for distribution to interested parties for implementation. It is envisioned that the leadership of the Jefferson Area Association will begin to initiate appropriate actions, and coordinate necessary activities with appropriate City of Dallas departments. Several recommendations will require additional actions by the City of Dallas:

Department of Public Works

This department must consider all recommendations for capital improvements. Costs, future bond programs, and timing of projects will have to be determined.

Department of Parks and Recreation

This department will need to consider the function, costs, and construction of the recommended plazas. Since these are proposed as public parks, the *Park Board* will also have to approve these decisions.

Department of Planning and Development

This department will have the responsibility of coordinating the above activities as well as specific projects that are considered through the zoning process. The recommended local historic district will entail negotiating with owners for design criteria which must be approved by the *Landmark Commission*. The *City Plan Commission* and the *City Council* also must approve the designation.

The recommended special sign district regulations will also be negotiated with owners and approved by the *City Plan Commission* and *City Council*. It is anticipated that the architectural and sign guidelines will be considered and approved together.

V. - CONCLUSION

It is believed that there is great potential for the revitalization of the Jefferson Boulevard commercial district and environs. The reader of this report must remember that Jefferson is not an aged warehouse district waiting for "*discovery*" by investors to be adapted for new and different uses. Jefferson is a large, mainstream retail area serving a significant segment of Dallas' population - a role that the area has played for almost 100 years. This plan prepares a framework by which those interested can respond to the physical revitalization potential, and sets out concepts for organizing those efforts.

As has been stressed throughout this report, the key to an effective revitalization effort lies with the ability of the JAA to marshal support from property owners, merchants and area residents. No matter how many economic programs are created, or (government) funds infused into the area, the role of the City of Dallas will always remain secondary to that of the people who wish to make a change.