

Festival Modernism: Downtown Plans & Pedestrian Malls 1956-1974

By

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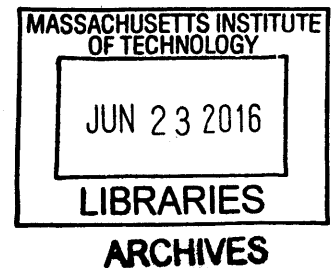
Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
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ABSTRACT

Between 1956 and 1974, many cities in the United States pedestrianized their main shopping corridors in an effort to revive retail, draw middle-class white consumers back to the central city, and emulate the increasingly popular and profitable suburban shopping centers burgeoning at the fringe. By the late 1980s, pedestrian malls, once a panacea for struggling downtowns, had become the quintessential failed urban project. The rise and fall of the pedestrian mall marks a critical moment in the trajectory of modernism and the history of the American city. The recent and controversial demolition of one of the era's foremost pedestrian malls, Fresno's Fulton Mall (1964), planned by Victor Gruen Associates and designed by the landscape architect Garrett Eckbo, calls for a critical reappraisal of this overlooked chapter of city planning, especially as U.S. cities and downtown partnerships embrace pedestrian plazas, "complete streets," tactical urbanism, and "better blocks" as a strategy for economic revitalization.

By coding the visual material of downtown plans published from the late 1950s through the early 1970s, this paper traces the evolution of critical motifs, themes, and ideas embedded within plans that featured pedestrian malls. Four case studies, including Victor Gruen's seminal plan *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* (1956), Gruen's *Central Area Fresno* (1960), I.M. Pei's central business district plan for Oklahoma City (1964), and the plan for downtown Buffalo by Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (1971), demonstrate how different plan makers conceptualized pedestrianization as part of downtown renewal.

This thesis makes two contentions. First, it identifies the pedestrian mall as a critical precursor to the postmodern, festival marketplace and an expression of a "festival" or "townscape" modernism that represented a middle ground between the oppositional paradigms of clearance and preservation. Pedestrian malls reveal the humanism embedded within aspects of late modernism, and the modernism cloaked by the historicized festival marketplace. The second contention, based on a close reading of downtown plans from the era, is that pedestrian malls were rarely accompanied by broader programs of reform, infrastructure building, and regional planning that might have made them successful. In many cases, their implementation coincided with a nadir in downtown retail and failed as a cosmetic resolution to embedded economic problems. Together, these findings provide planners and policymakers reshaping cities today with a critical historical context for revitalization efforts and important lessons relating to the scale, scope, and challenge of rebuilding downtowns.

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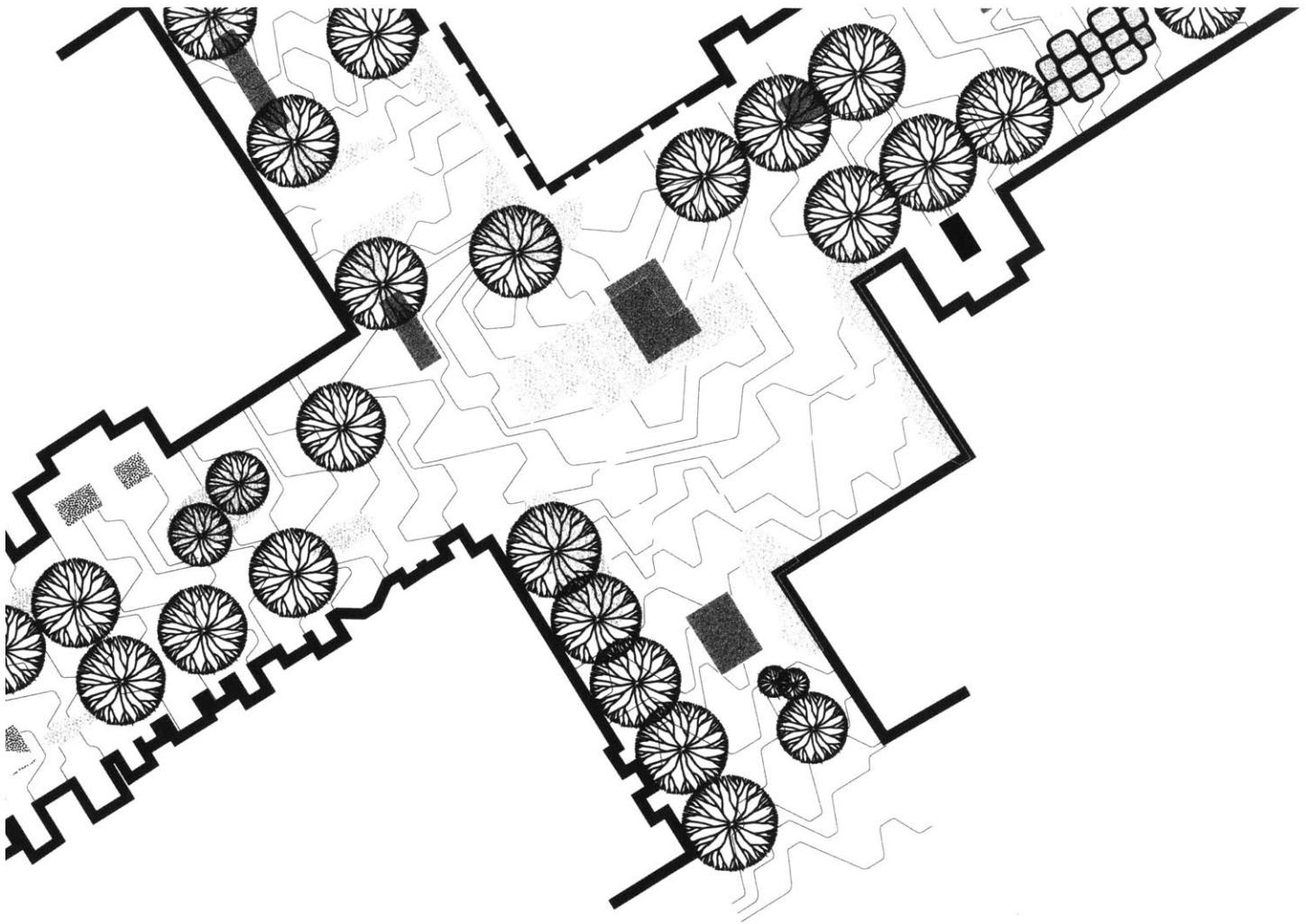
FESTIVAL MODERNISM

Downtown Plans &
Pedestrian Malls

1956-1974

David Vega-Barachowitz
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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
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above: Fulton Mall, Fresno, California, Garrett Eckbo and
Victor Gruen Associates, 1964. Trace by author.

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INTRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION

Late in the winter of December 2014, I discovered a collection of old city plans in the stacks of MIT's Rotch Library. The plans, dating mostly from the 1950s through 1970s, were large, lay-flat documents with elaborate and sophisticated graphics, beautifully rendered eye-level perspectives, and colorful, abstract maps and diagrams. The plans documented a vision that cities in the United States would embrace for renewing their downtowns at the height of the urban renewal era. Most followed the same basic formula, consisting of a large, circumferential highway loop around the central business district, a series of immense peripheral parking structures, a cluster of modern office towers, and elaborate networks of pedestrian malls, elevated walkways, and subterranean passages threading across the city's core.

Among the collection of downtown plans, a 1956 proposal by Victor Gruen Associates for the core of Fort Worth, Texas, entitled *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow*, stood out. In contrast to other plans from the era, Gruen's Fort Worth plan conveyed a festivity and humanism more reminiscent of Gordon Cullen's *Townscape* or Pieter Bruegel's painting of *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent* than the streamlined superblock modernism of its contemporaries. As I delved further into the archives, I found that other plans had mimicked the basic paradigm proposed at Fort Worth and I traced a pattern of these from the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s. The discovery of this pattern and the investigation that followed revealed a set of actors and ideas, embodied by Gruen, James Rouse, Morris Lapidus, Thomas Todd, and David Wallace, among others, that ran counter to the prevailing perceptions of city planning during the urban renewal era. In this thesis, I refer to this as *Festival Modernism*. *Festival Modernism*, in contrast to superblock modernism or expressway modernism, drew inspiration from the bustling squares of European cities



and distilled the carnival atmosphere of Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens, World's Fairs, and Disneyland into a tonic for tired downtowns. In Victor Gruen, it found its stout impresario, effervescent pitchman, and most prolific practitioner.

Students of city planning, including those of my own department at MIT, are taught the history of the profession, and of the American city, as a story of David and Goliath, an epic struggle in which Jane Jacobs defeats a hulking figure of Robert Moses in an epic struggle over the fate of New York. The history of urban renewal, and the history of urban planning more broadly, is often couched in these frames—the image of Pruitt Igoe's bulk falling to ashes; a heroic Jane Jacobs shot from below in the frame of the Washington Square Arch; the pathetic figure of an aging Robert Moses crouching over an oversized map, pointing in vain to highways that will never be built. Downtown plans from the urban renewal era neither negate these images, nor do they suggest that our conceptions of either David or Goliath are false. Nonetheless, these plans, and the projects that they produced, provide a glimpse into a current of modernism that is often overlooked and one that may provide a critical context for the profession today.

In this thesis, through the lens of the downtown plan, I set out to unpack one manifestation of festival modernism—the pedestrian mall. Pedestrian malls, like World's Fairs, people movers, and shopping centers, belong to a lineage of modernism that sought to enchant as much as it sought to perfect or streamline. Their sudden rise in the late 1950s, followed by their gradual decline in the 1970s and 1980s, remains a rich and uncharted story. Moreover, the recent and ongoing demolition of pedestrian malls calls for their critical reappraisal among planners.

1

(above left)

Jane Jacobs, Washington Square Park, 1958. Credit: Fred W. McDarrah; Getty Images

2

(above right)

Robert Moses. Credit: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

3

(right)

Victor Gruen, Southdale Shopping Center under construction. Completed 1956. Credit: Minneapolis Star Tribune



In the epoch of urban renewal, figures like Victor Gruen do not fit neatly into a David versus Goliath narrative. An Austrian Jewish architect who fled the Nazis for New York City in 1938, Gruen's ideal city fell ambiguously between urban renewal's schisms of the activist and the power broker. He was a contradictory figure who loathed automobiles, but felt strongly that the only way to save the city was to accommodate them.¹ He was quick to adopt the rhetoric of Jane Jacobs, even though his firm had drawn up the plans for Charles River Park, the neighborhood that replaced Boston's ill-fated West End. Based in Beverly Hills and most famous for his early shopping malls outside Detroit and Minneapolis, Gruen participated in the shaping of the mid-century American vision as much as Le Corbusier or Robert Moses. And while his contribution to the architecture of retail and shopping centers has been well charted, the latter half of his American career, which focused on reviving the American downtown, has received far less attention.²

In *Close-Up: How to Read the American City*, the urban critic Grady Clay wrote of Gruen, "[his] proposals were widely published; they became official doctrine in hundreds of city plans of the 1960's, and were built into the townscapes of the 1970's. If anything had become a major

1 M. Jeffrey Hardwick. *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 218.

2 The two major works on Victor Gruen, M. Jeffrey Hardwick's *Mall Maker* (2004) and Alex Wall's *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City* (2005) both explore elements of his downtown work. Hardwick includes a lengthy discussion of the Fort Worth plan (166-198), which is referenced in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Wall looks at a variety of Gruen's downtown plans, including both his retail and residential work (116-177). Wall's research is referenced in Chapter 4.

new epitome district³ of the American city by 1972, it was Gruen's.⁴ The vision to which Clay eludes, first illustrated in Gruen's *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* plan, was characterized by a set of common elements - "a pedestrian-free core with beautiful malls...an enclave of huge building blocks, reinforced by great parking garages at the corners, and the whole surrounded by a giant freeway system giving easy access to and from the heart." Clay's appreciation of the Gruen plan as an *epitome district* of the 1970s reminds us that, for better or worse, we are living in Gruen's downtown. In fact, many of the things that cities are now actively seeking to remedy, such as parking "craters,"⁵ staid modern office towers, and perimeter freeways, were actively promoted in the Gruen plans, as both an enabler of the pedestrian core and a pragmatic retrofit to keep downtown competitive with the suburban shopping mall.

As a paradoxical and quixotic figure at the crest of late modernism, Gruen's legacy bears heavily upon the history of the urban planning field. As a master of largely forgotten yet highly influential works, many buried within plans that are the preserve of off-site archives, Gruen stands at the end a long line of figures whom history has overlooked in the characteristic jump from Burnham to Corbusier to Moses to Jacobs. Much like the planning careers of George Kessler, John Nolen, Harland Bartholomew, and Ladislav Segoe, among others, many of Gruen's works remain overlooked in part because they cannot be reduced or read in a single building complex. Instead, their ideas are contained as artifacts in plans, many of which are difficult to find, in poor quality, or completely neglected. The extent to which these plans were implemented is a subject of debate and speculation, especially since so many of these projects came about through a confluence of multiple actors and agencies, as opposed to a single power broker.

Questions

Through the downtown plans of Victor Gruen and his contemporaries from mid-1950s through the mid-1970s, this thesis set out to unpack the evolution, conception, implementation, and ultimate decline of pedestrian mall as an object of good city form. Why do planners and

3 Grady Clay, *Close-up: How to Read the American City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1980), 38. Clay defines an "epitome district" in the following terms: "In linguistics, an epitome is a brief statement expressing the essence of something, a short presentation of a large topic. A city's epitome districts are crammed with clues that trigger our awareness to the larger scene-things around the corner, processes out of sight, history all but covered up. They stand for other things; they generate metaphors; they are the sort of places that, ideally, help us get it all together."

4 Clay, *Close-up*, 61.

5 See Sarah Goodyear. "How Parking Lots Became the Scourge of American Downtowns." *The Atlantic: CityLab*, June 5, 2014, www.citylab.com/commute/2014/06/how-parking-lots-became-the-scourge-of-american-downtowns/372207/.

designers today accept the pedestrian mall as a failed urban project? Why has this objectively good idea—a pedestrianized, traffic-free city core—been deemed unworkable in the United States, even while it has thrived elsewhere?

Though pedestrian malls, including Fresno's Fulton Mall, have recently come under threat of demolition in the few cities where they still exist, this thesis is not an argument for their preservation. Nor is it an investigation, borne out in rigorous economic analysis of retail and revenue data, of whether or not the pedestrian malls indeed failed, or at least accelerated the decline of downtown—a popular claim among politicians wanting to remove them. Rather, I wanted to understand the pedestrian mall as an expression and an iteration of modernism. Specifically, I wanted to trace the lineage between the pedestrian mall and its immediate successor, the festival marketplace of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Why is the festival marketplace widely perceived as a *success* where the pedestrian mall is considered a *failure*? What threads connect the late modernist retail utopia of Gruen to its postmodern successor? How do these links inform our conceptualization of modernism and postmodernism in the context of downtown revitalization?

While plans provide a lens for this investigation, they also offer a data source rich with information about other aspects of downtown planning, urban renewal, and societal change. In the course of my study, I have traced these changes in detail and in addition to unpacking pedestrianization, I here seek to partially explain how and why plans themselves changed.

Methodology

To answer these questions, I adopted a mixed-methods approach that combined archival research, case studies, plan coding, interviews, and process tracing.

Archival Research

Plans, as the “major intellectual projects published within the planning profession” and “[idea] vessels for larger intellectual concepts,”⁶ provide invaluable insight into the vision, intentions and anticipated outcomes of this period. Many downtown plans are rare, fragile documents that are virtually invisible from the present historical record. Few urban planners actively read through plans and many planning students are only indirectly confronted with them through excerpted images, ideas, or maps. For this

6 Brent D. Ryan. “Reading Through a Plan: A Visual Interpretation of What Plans Mean and How They Innovate,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 77.4 (2011): 310.

investigation, the plan itself constituted the primary data for my analysis and served as an invaluable artifact and a living manifestation of ideas encoded within our built environment.

At the outset of my research, I undertook an extensive campaign to locate and analyze downtown plans from the urban renewal era in the collection of MIT's Rotch Library and the Loeb Library at Harvard. In the early 1960s, MIT's Department of City Planning solicited states and municipalities to submit copies of past and present planning documents. As a result, the school has one of the largest libraries of downtown and comprehensive plans of any university in the country.⁷ While many of the plans were readily available, a large proportion of them were either not catalogued or inaccessible.

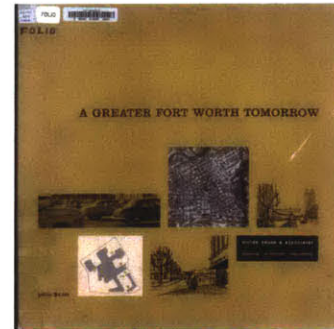
Early in my research, I was fortunate to discover the collection of Crawford C. Westbrook, Vice President and Head of Planning at Victor Gruen Associates from the 1961-1979 in MIT's institutional archives. The Westbrook collection, which included a majority of the plans produced by Victor Gruen Associates in the 1960s, offered a comprehensive insight into the firm's work as well as an extensive catalogue of references and information relevant to my research.⁸

Case Studies

After collecting and surveying a cross section of downtown plans from the urban renewal era, I selected four case studies. These case studies allowed me to distill critical themes, using both seminal and archetypal plans from the period. I selected my first two case studies, focusing on the work of Victor Gruen Associates, due to their historical significance in downtown planning and in the career of Victor Gruen. The first case study, Gruen's *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* (1956), was chosen because it was a paradigmatic plan on which other plans of the era were based. Gruen's *Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and Implementation* (1960), meanwhile, was selected both as an exemplary model of a plan by Victor Gruen Associates and for its association with the firm's most successful project, Fresno's Fulton Mall. For my third and fourth case

⁷ This was conveyed to me by staff at MIT's Rotch Library. Late in my thesis investigation, the library staff showed me an extensive library of uncatalogued plans, pamphlets and brochures in its offsite annex. While I discovered these materials too late to comprehensively study and use them, the fact that the planning department had at one time thought to undertake such a collection provided in itself a valuable source of data on plans. Ultimately, these materials will have to be the subject of a future study.

⁸ Other plans were obtained through online sources and digital collections. Archive.org, HathiTrust and several other sites have digitized collections, through which many plans have been made available to the public. Very few cities have made electronic copies of past planning documents available online, with Indianapolis and Philadelphia as notable exceptions. Likewise, architecture and planning firms typically do not publicize archival work, though most are willing to share electronic copies of resources where available.



A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow
Victor Gruen Associates, 1956



Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation
Victor Gruen Associates, 1960



Central Business District, Oklahoma City
I.M. Pei & Associates



The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York
Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, 1971

FACTUAL



Three men in suits stare into the air.

CONTEXTUAL



An image of Gruen and his partners overseeing the construction of Southdale in the mid-1950s at the dawn of the suburban shopping center boom.

TEMPORAL



Gruen as a contradictory figure who strove to save downtown while building shopping malls that killed them at the periphery. The inherent tension between real estate economics and utopian urban theory.

studies, I selected two plans that presented a contrast to Gruen's work. *A General Neighborhood Renewal Plan: Central Business District, Oklahoma City* (1964) by I.M. Pei & Associates demonstrated an alternative paradigm of downtown planning and design within the same era. Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd's *The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo* (1971), was chosen because it revealed how Gruen's paradigmatic model had evolved towards the end of the urban renewal era, especially in response to changing federal urban policies.

1. *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* by Victor Gruen Associates, 1956

2. *Central Area Fresno, California, Volume 2: The Plan and Its Implementation* by Victor Gruen Associates, 1960

3. *A General Neighborhood Renewal Plan: Central Business District, Oklahoma City* by I.M. Pei & Associates, 1964

4. *The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York* by Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd, 1971

A Visual Theory of Plan Interpretation

I analyzed each of these plans using the visual theory of plan reading introduced by Brent Ryan in his article, "Reading Through a Plan."⁹ In this article, Ryan derives "a theory of plan interpretation" based on an approach adapted from Erwin Panofsky's *Studies in Iconology* (1939). Using the "imaginary narrative of a man raising his hat in the street," Panofsky proposed three "strata, or meanings, in art."¹⁰ The first was *factual*, representing the "'plain sense' of the event (a man raising his hat) as it corresponded to 'certain objects (and actions) known to [him] from practical experience.'"¹¹ The second strata was *conventional* or "recognized as being particular to the society and time in which it occurred."¹² Panofsky's third strata was *intrinsic*, constituting "part of a much larger portrait not only of the man's individual personality, but also of what could be called his philosophy, his 'way of viewing things and reacting to the world,'" in relation to "our general information as to the gentleman's period, nationality, class, intellectual traditions, and so on."¹³

Based on Panofsky's iconology, Ryan developed an "analogous

9 Brent D. Ryan. "Reading Through A Plan: A Visual Interpretation of What Plans Mean and How They Innovate." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 77.4 (2011): 309-327.

10 Ryan, 312.

11 Ibid, Ibid.

12 Ibid, Ibid.

13 Ibid, Ibid.

theory of plan interpretation”¹⁴ which contains three levels of meaning: factual, contextual (conventional), and temporal (intrinsic). These may be described, in essence, as the 1) literal reading of the plan document itself; 2) the derivation of the “political, social, economic, and physical” context in which the plan was written; and 3) the significance of the plan “in the context of the history of a city’s plans, the history of a city, the life of the plan’s author, or the history of the society that produced the plan.”¹⁵ In his paper, Ryan illustrates his “visual theory of plan reading” by selecting, analyzing, and then comparing three plans for these levels of meanings.

Ryan’s plan reading methodology established a strong framework for my analysis, yet also presented several challenges during the course of my investigation. Whereas an isolated image conveys factual meaning based on the scene, action or event that it portrays, plans express multiple layers of factual and contextual meaning simultaneously, embedding contested narratives of past, present, and future. In WMRT’s 1971 plan for downtown Buffalo, for instance, the plan presented itself as a response to the anticipated future growth of downtown. A re-reading of the stated contextual meaning of that plan, however, shows that those projections had little merit and that the plan was more likely undertaken by a downtown business coalition precisely due to an absence of such growth.

Comparing past and present plans based on incomplete records and often unreliable or biased secondary sources proved a formidable challenge throughout this research. In several cases, I was unable to locate either a prior or a subsequent planning document for comparison as part of the case study analysis. In these instances, I relied on either fragmented secondary source materials or comparable plans from other cities. In some instances, the nature of the plan itself presented a problem. Oklahoma City’s 1964 Pei Plan consisted only of a collection of engineering specifications and a detailed site plan. Unlike plans by Gruen, it was not designed as public brochure for distribution. While separate renderings had been produced for promotional purposes and a massive scale model built to advertise the project, a direct comparison proved difficult given the format of the other case studies. As a result, I had to rely upon a reading of the plan’s key renderings, an associated promotional video accessible online, and images of the site model to interpret its meaning.

As my research progressed, I encountered several problems with the methodology, particularly in the arena of *temporal* plan readings. Gruen’s Fort Worth plan, for instance, called for multiple temporal meanings, including a discussion of Victor Gruen Associates as a firm, of

14 Ryan, 313.

15 Ibid, Ibid.

the central business district plan as a typology, and of the individual plan makers responsible for the drawings, layout, and authorship of the plan document itself. In the limited space of this thesis, all of these threads, however interesting, could not be pursued. Gruen's relationship to the real estate economist Larry Smith, for instance, is only lightly mentioned in this thesis. Likewise, my discussions of consumer and retail history and of downtown business coalitions could have been much longer. Plan readings benefit from a thematic focus. While I was nominally focused on pedestrianization and representation here, these final plan readings at times sacrifice breadth at the expense of depth. My approach to plan reading, while multi-faceted, might have benefited from a more limited focus.

Plan Coding

While plan readings served as the primary methodology for this thesis, to support and enrich the individual case studies, I coded close to twenty downtown plans prepared from 1956 through 1974, out of a total of approximately 60 plans that were originally surveyed. I adapted my coding methodology from a pair of studies conducted in 1973 and 1989 by UC-Berkeley College of Environmental Design Professor Michael Southworth.¹⁶ Southworth was interested in coding key features of urban design plans from the 1970s and 1980s. He coded each urban design plan for a variety of stated goals, criteria, and visual strategies used and then developed his findings on the basis of this research and supplementary data. In contrast to Southworth's approach, I coded downtown plans based on their visual material alone, looking in detail at illustrative site plans, maps, and delineated perspectives. This included noting the existence of common vignettes, such as an executive looking out his office window onto a plaza below or a woman shopping beneath an arcade. I recorded a variety of different types of elements, drawing styles, and details, resulting in almost 300 codes analyzed for each plan in total.

By looking in detail at individual drawings and their constituent elements, I gained critical insight into the evolution of certain motifs through time and the differences in the individual styles of certain plan makers. The inclusion of trash receptacles or birds in a drawing informed or reaffirmed ideas I had developed from my initial plan readings, and in some cases, indicated fresh insights. By forcing myself to look for those elements excluded from the drawings, as well as those included in them, I discovered unexpected traits and linkages, which led me to further research.

¹⁶ Michael Southworth and Susan Southworth. "Environmental Quality in Cities and Regions." *Town Planning Review* 44.3 (1973): 231-253.
Michael Southworth. "Theory and Practice of Contemporary Urban Design: A Review of Urban Design Plans in the United States." *Town Planning Review* 60.4 (1989): 369-402.

While such a detailed analysis of visual materials would be best reinforced by a parallel assessment of written material and quantitative projections, the method I have developed here provides a basis for future studies and an important piece of supplemental data in my mixed methodology.

Since Gruen's work served as a touchstone and a reference for the coding exercise, the methodology expresses a certain degree of bias towards the characteristic elements of a "Gruen plan." Had this study focused on the work of I.M. Pei or Edmund Bacon, for instance, the coding criteria might have taken a different shape and yielded different results. Likewise, the plan selection process privileged plans with a certain amount of visual material to read, resulting in a sample that may not be representative of the entire population of downtown plans. Nonetheless, efforts were made to find a suitable cross section of plans reflective a variety of types and actors. Availability of digital or library copies of plans heavily influenced the overall selection.

Process Tracing

In order to distill how the idea of a pedestrianized core evolved and spread during this era, I mapped personal and professional relationships, common projects, correspondences, and where possible, evidence of direct influence. Given the number of themes and actors involved in this study, process tracing proved valuable in two respects. First, it elucidated connections that might have otherwise gone unnoticed while providing partial evidence of coalitions or movements over the course of time. Second, thematic process tracing, such as the evolution of the elevated pedestrian walkway, demonstrated the divergent fates of certain ideas and physical design strategies through time.

Interviews

Interviews provided an important, if ultimately secondary, source of information. I conducted three interviews during the course of my thesis. The first was with Roberto Brambilla, who produced a series of pamphlets on pedestrian malls and traffic-free zones in the mid-1970s.¹⁷ The second and third were with former employees of Victor Gruen Associates, Crawford Westbrook and Gary Hack. Westbrook, whose collection provided me with invaluable data, provided critical insights into Gruen and the downtown planning process in the 1960s and early 1970s more broadly. Gary Hack, a professor emeritus at MIT and former

¹⁷ *Footnotes* was a five-volume pamphlet series on pedestrian malls and traffic-free zones by Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo published in 1976-1977. It was produced jointly by the Columbia University Center for Advanced Research in Urban and Environmental Affairs and the Institute for Environmental Action.

Gruen Associates employee, supplemented and enriched Westbrook's comments. By and large, their comments echoed the existing literature on Gruen.

The mixed-methods approach I used in this thesis proved effective in certain regards and less effective in others. The largest problem I encountered was in defining the appropriate scope of my investigation. While the primary research for the thesis consisted of downtown *plan* analysis, the theoretical outcomes of the research related to both the plans themselves as well as the *projects* they produced. In some cases, the plans indicated one story or outcome, while the projects themselves revealed a different one. Gruen's plan for downtown Paterson, New Jersey (1962), for instance, belonged to a category of plans developed in the flurry of commissions that followed his Fort Worth scheme. The mall itself, however, was not realized until 1974, as a one-block pedestrian mall by a different firm (Beyer, Blinder, Belle).¹⁸ The built project told a different narrative from the plan, owing to the decade that had passed between the project's conception and its implementation.

The uneven focus on Gruen as a protagonist in the narrative of downtown revitalization presented some difficulties. First, given the scope of the thesis, I was unable to provide a thorough digest of Gruen's background and have thus only mentioned in brief his early work designing storefronts, his downtown residential plans, and new town developments. Thus, while the original focus of this thesis may have included more information on Gruen, ultimately, it shifted more towards an exposition of plans and pedestrian malls, with Gruen as a first act rather than a focus of the investigation. Other figures, such as James Rouse, David Wallace, and I.M. Pei, emerged as important actors in the story and thus warranted additional discussion. Many important figures in the story of downtown in the urban renewal era, such as Jane Jacobs, William Zeckendorf, Robert Moses, G. Holmes Perkins, and Edmund Bacon, receive limited or only partial treatment here. A fuller discussion of the counterattack on urban renewal and a more detailed discussion or qualification of its critiques might have benefitted the overall research.

Era of Focus

I selected the interval from 1956 through 1974 as a period of investigation because these dates provide an adequate frame for both late modernist urbanism and urban renewal. 1956 marked both the passage of the Interstate Highway Act and the release of Victor Gruen's seminal Fort

¹⁸ John Beyer, Richard Blinder, and John Belle all worked for Gruen Associates in the 1960s before splitting off to create their own architectural firm.

Worth plan. By 1956, many American cities had begun their first slum clearance and redevelopment efforts or were in the process of publishing their first major renewal plans. The passage of the highway act, meanwhile, changed the scale of renewal and exacerbated its ultimate impacts. As federal money flowed towards urban reconstruction and the first large scale renewal projects were realized, the urban renewal establishment came increasingly under siege. Critiques of the urban renewal order, which began in the late 1950s with work by Herbert Gans, Jane Jacobs and others, crystallized around 1962. By 1964, with the publication of *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*,¹⁹ the academy began to turn against policies that it had helped to craft.

Just as urban renewal came under suspicion, it expanded considerably under President Lyndon Johnson and his Great Society. By 1968, however, following race riots in major American cities, the assumptions that had governed earlier iterations of the program came deeply into question and resulted in a slate of policy reforms to include public input and participation. The years 1968-1974 marked a final flowering of the urban renewal era, which produced many great experiments that nevertheless failed to stem the tide of protest or make up for the displacement and clearance that had thrown so many lives into turmoil. It is perhaps surprising, then, that 1974, the year President Richard Nixon definitively retrenched on federal urban policy and cancelled the Model Cities program, also marked the peak year for the construction of pedestrian malls. The pedestrian malls, like many comprehensive downtown rehabilitation projects, flourished late and failed quickly.

Results and Contentions

Based on my research, I have arrived at several preliminary conclusions. First, I contend that the perceived *failure* of the pedestrian mall, and the perceived success of the festival marketplace, overlooks a story of continuity and common origin between these successive movements. Pedestrian malls did not themselves fail, but were one expression of the failure of downtowns all around the United States, which was in turn a product of poor urban policies, unyielding segregation, and naïve conceptions about the nature of retail decentralization. Figures like Victor Gruen and James Rouse failed to realize or act counter to the inherent conflict between decentralization policy (from the 1920s through the 1950s) and recentralization policy (from the 1950s onward) until it was too late. The

19 *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*. ed. James Q. Wilson, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964).

failure of planners and policymakers to limit the growth of suburban shopping centers reflected the ineffectiveness of regional planning in the United States as well as its ambiguous attitude towards central cities over time. Moreover, while many festival marketplaces were successful, many also failed. Their success or failure depended more upon the size and economy of the city in question, as well as the relationship between the periphery and downtown. Timing was also a factor, since the construction of many pedestrian malls coincided with the departure of major department stores, while the advent of the marketplaces rode the tide of nascent gentrification.

The divergent fates of these two strategies indicate two critical points about cities and the public realm in the United States. The first is the relative insecurity of public space in contradistinction to private or privatized spaces in the United States. The management techniques that worked at the malls—privatization, coordination, control, security—eventually came downtown.²⁰ Pedestrian malls, which often took the form of a cosmetic treatment in the absence of strong downtown partnerships, exhibited weaknesses in this respect. Where strong management did prevail, the malls tended to succeed for a longer period of time. In other cases, the peculiarities of the site (near a beach) or the characteristics of the population (near a university) gave them a higher chance of success, a point that has been noted elsewhere.²¹ The second point is that the same strategies that made pedestrianization appealing were part of a larger program of highways and parking that also undermined their success. Making cities easier to drive into also entailed making them easier to get out, and often, without attentive planning, the latter prevailed over the former. Vast parking lots and highway rings produced negative externalities that diminished the attraction of downtown areas, even as they ensured greater overall access. These “improvements” also tended to sever ties between downtowns and their adjacent neighborhoods, creating moats around the central business district that either intentionally or effectively excluded potential customers (often undesirable minorities). The changing racial and class makeup of the customers in the downtown, moreover, precipitated the departure of many merchants and business interests, an expression of embedded racism and segregation that bore itself out in urban renewal policies and downtown revitalization.

In the course of this evolution, plans shifted according to new

20 Bernard J. Frieden and Lynne B. Sagalyn. *Downtown, Inc: How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 61.

21 Cole E. Judge “The Experiment of American Pedestrian Malls: Trends Analysis, Necessary Indicators for Success and Recommendations for Fresno’s Fulton Mall,” *Fresno Future Conference Strong Cities, Strong Communities Downtown Fresno Partnership*, November, 11, 2013, 12-13.

policies and funding sources, while still reflecting the basic building blocks proposed by Gruen. The transition from the pedestrian mall to transit mall in the 1970s, for instance, demonstrated the influence of federal subsidies for public transit on built outcomes (often in spite of unchanged local priorities, i.e. consumption). Emerging ideas in architecture, such as the emergence of “megastructure,” also changed the nature of both pedestrian malls and the plans behind them. The rise of historic preservation in the mid-1960s had an impact on both plans and pedestrian malls, often producing fascinating instances of hybridity between contemporary architecture and historic rehabilitation.

I argue in this thesis that the dialectic produced between the *failure* of the pedestrian mall and the *success* of the festival marketplace provides evidence of a hitherto unrecognized *festival modernism*. *Festival modernism* responded to the functionalist dialogue of early CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) by celebrating and reinterpreting the messiness of the traditional European market squares or Greek Agoras and applying these to a core once ignored as obsolete. Rather than viewing history and modernity as oppositional forces, festival modernism aligned modernization²² and consumerism with the theatrical reenactments of traditional urban space. It produced carnivals and spectacles and follies that indulged in techno-utopian fantasies of progress, while embedding this progress in the ritual of the medieval fair. Considered as a distinct strain or phase of modernism, *festival modernism* dissolves the perceived dichotomies of modernism and post-modernism. It suggests both that the pedestrian mall was a critical precursor to postmodern urbanism, just as the festival marketplace was a recapitulation and extension of fundamentally modernist ideas.

In his book, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (1982), Marshall Berman echoed this sentiment, arguing that the postmodern turn of the 1970s was in fact “a modernism of ghosts” based on “the rehabilitation of ethnic memory and history as a vital part of personal identity.”²³ Berman divided modernism into three phases. In the

22 In this thesis, I refer to “modernization” as a process and to “modernism” as a set of ideas or a discourse. Highway building, road widening, zoning, and storefront modernization all represent expressions of the former. Modernization represented a reaction to perceived blight and stemmed from both the physical and socioeconomic consequences of incipient decentralization as well as the comprehensive rationality of Taylorization. Modernism, meanwhile, is understood here as an intellectual dialogue rooted in enlightenment ideals and progressivism. This thesis focuses on modernism in terms of planning and design, as derived from both the early physical planning tradition and the CIAM discourse on urbanism. Modernization represents the adaptation and realization of that discourse. Victor Gruen served as a translator between the discourse of modernism and its adoption as a physical strategy to forestall downtown deterioration.

23 Marshall Berman. *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*. (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 333.

first phase, from the start of sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, mankind “groped desperately but half blindly”²⁴ to make sense of the “spiritual and material upheavals of an industrial revolution.”²⁵ For this first phase, Berman uses the figure of Goethe’s *Faust*, who discovers that “the only way for modern man to transform himself... is by radically transforming the whole physical and social and moral world around him.”²⁶ The second phase begins with the French Revolution in 1790s, when “a great modern public shares the feeling of living in a revolutionary age, an age that generates explosive upheavals in every dimension of personal, social and political life.”²⁷ Berman’s third and final phase of modernism, in the twentieth century, “expands to take in virtually the whole world,” until “it shatters into a multitude of fragments... and loses its vividness, resonance, and depth,” losing “touch with the roots of its own modernity.”²⁸

Berman argues that the frustration with the third phase of modernism, a modernity cut off from the past, “hurtling forward at such a dizzying pace that it cannot take root,”²⁹ called for a return to a “modernity of yesterday,”³⁰ which he says is embodied by the ideas of Jane Jacobs. He contends that while Jacobs’s ideal of the street was assumed by the neoconservative movement as a symbol of “radical anti-modernism,” in actuality, the things that it celebrated—strangers, different classes, ethnic groups, ages, beliefs, and life-styles, discovery, and equality—were couched in “distinctively modernist terms.”³¹ “The street,” Berman wrote, “was experienced as the medium in which the totality of modern material and spiritual forces could meet, clash, interfuse and work out their ultimate meanings and fates.”³² “This understanding of modernism,” he states, “should help us clarify some of the ironies of the contemporary ‘post-modern’ mystique... the modernism of the 1970s was distinguished by its desire and power to remember, to remember so much of what modern societies—regardless of what their ideologies and who their ruling classes are—want to forget. But when contemporary modernists lose touch with and deny their own modernity, they only echo the ruling class self-delusion that it has conquered the troubles and perils of the past, and meanwhile, they cut themselves off from a primary source of their own strength.”³³

24 Berman, 17.

25 Ibid, 39.

26 Ibid, 40.

27 Ibid, 17.

28 Ibid, 17.

29 Ibid, 35.

30 Ibid, 36.

31 Ibid, 323.

32 Ibid, 316.

33 Ibid, 346.

Echoing Berman, upon his visit to Faneuil Hall Marketplace in 1981, the Boston Globe architecture critic Robert Campbell commented, “The Marketplace is an impersonation of a kind of urban life that no longer exists in most of America. It’s a theatrical representation of street life. It has to be this, because that is a stage we have to go through as we begin cautiously, self-consciously to re-enact the urban culture we abandoned.”³⁴

The widespread acceptance of the pedestrian mall as a “failed” urban project by planners today reflects the degree to which planners in the United States today have failed to grapple with their own modernism. In our acceptance of a self-conscious re-enactment of the past—a prevailing of historical precedent over invention or novel composition (widely derided as futurism)—many planners act in protracted self-denial of its core function—the anticipation and projection of the future. In the shift from totality to balance, from clearance to rehabilitation, we have simultaneously enacted a shift from public to private, and from proactive renewal to entrenched conservation. In rediscovering the overlooked humanism of the modernist project and the cloaked modernism of the postmodern project, we can observe a continuity of ideals in spite of a disjuncture in form.

Overview

This thesis has been divided into three parts, each consisting of two chapters.

Part I: Plan Making and Retail Modernization: 1893-1956

Chapter One, “City Beautiful to City Practical: Plan Making from 1893-1956,” begins by exploring the history of downtown plans and plan makers leading up to 1956. In contrast to other histories, such as David Smiley’s *Pedestrian Modern* and Alex Wall’s *Victor Gruen*, which have focused on retail and architectural history to a greater degree, this investigation will conduct a critical history of downtown *plan* making paradigms in the first half of the twentieth century. The objective of this initial investigation is to situate the Gruen plan archetype within a lineage of planning ideas going back to the late nineteenth century. As with the core of the thesis investigation, plan documents serve as primary data for the investigation. Plans for the four case study cities (Fort Worth, Fresno, Oklahoma City, Buffalo) provide a lens for more detailed exposition and analysis, as well as means for tracing ideas through time.

34 Robert Campbell. “Evaluation: Faneuil Hall Marketplace: Boston’s Upper of Urbanity.” *AIA Journal* 70.7 (1981): 33.

Chapter Two, “From Down Town to Shoppers’ World,” offers a detailed look at the immediate antecedents to the Gruen plan for Fort Worth. This chapter serves as a historical repository for key ideas that evolved in and around the seminal Gruen plan, such as the urban freeway program, the evolution of the suburban shopping mall, and the early history of pedestrianization before 1956. The goal of this chapter is to contextualize Gruen’s ideas in time, understand his influences, and provide a review of the key literature and scholarship on downtowns in this era.

Part II: Victor Gruen and City X

Chapter Three, “Making a Plan: A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow” investigate the genesis, development, and dissemination of Gruen’s seminal Fort Worth Plan. The plan will be analyzed for its factual, contextual, and temporal meanings and coded for its key ideas and motifs. This section seeks an understanding of the plan’s intentions, its eventual demise, and most of all, its impact as an idea that other cities around the United States adopted. This chapter will also highlight the act of plan making itself as a process, with a focus on the history of plan delineation (illustration) and the intellectual and creative culture fostered at Gruen’s firm in the late 1950s.

Chapter Four, “From Fort Worth to Fresno: The Pedestrian Mall Comes of Age,” assesses one of the most successful Gruen plans and pedestrian malls, Fresno’s Fulton Mall, designed by the landscape architect Garrett Eckbo. As a successful implementation of Gruen’s core concept, this chapter conducts a close plan reading, which is enriched by a discussion of early pedestrian malls and downtown revitalization projects. Chapter Four traces the arch of the Fulton Mall’s history within the context of its present day removal. It reflects upon multiple themes, including the relationship between downtown and suburban retail, the role of downtown coalitions, and highway planning.

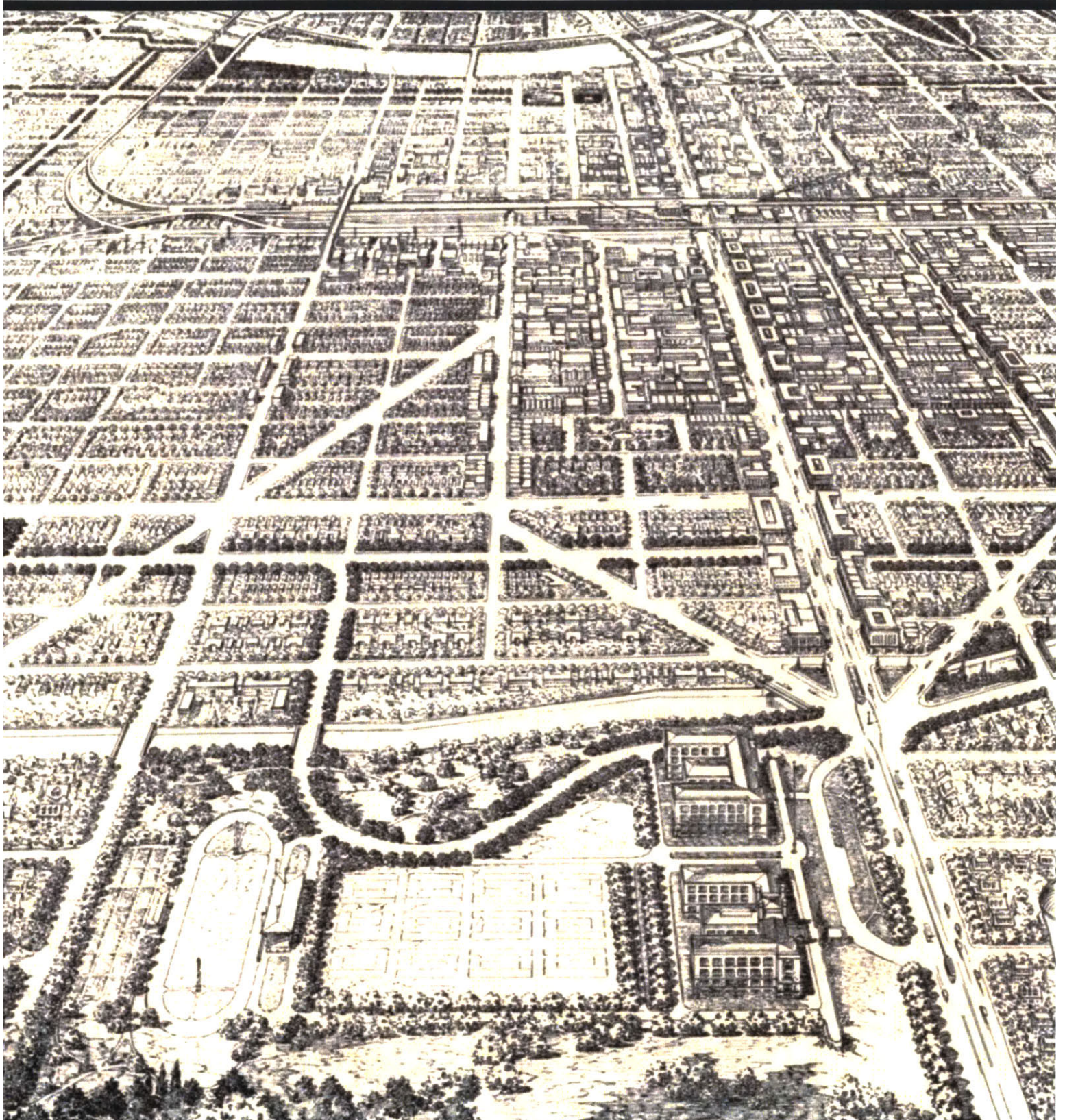
Part III: The Evolving Urban Renewal Order: I.M. Pei, David Wallace, and James Rouse

Chapter Five, “The Elaboration of the Plan: The Pei for Oklahoma City and WMRT’s Regional Center Plan for Downtown Buffalo” explores two plans that represent a critical counterpoint to the work of Victor Gruen Associates. This chapter traces the evolution of urban renewal from its origins to its peak in the mid-1960s. As a counterpoint to the Gruen plan, Pei suggests a model and conception of planning more aligned with the Corbusian model of early CIAM, which stands in contrast to

the festival modernism embraced by Gruen. Following the Pei Plan, the chapter follows the work of Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd (WMRT) through their 1971 plan for downtown Buffalo. The WMRT plan reading explores how planning responded (and did not respond) to the race riots and social revolution of the late 1960s, while also tracing the persistence of the Gruen model through the early 1970s.

The final chapter of the thesis, Chapter Six, “From Mall to Marketplace: Historic Preservation and the Rise of the Festival Marketplace” reveals the lineage from the pedestrian mall in the mid-1960s to the festival marketplace in the mid-1970s. The first half of the chapter explores the many pedestrian malls that were built from 1964-1974. Following this discussion, the rise of the festival marketplace and the historic preservation movement are discussed, including brief histories of Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco, Pike Place Market in Seattle, and Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston. The last section of the chapter recapitulates the story of downtown renewal through the career of James Rouse, whose work touched each phase of the narrative from the 1950s through the 1980s. Rouse’s story provides a framework for the discussion of late modernism and the failure of the pedestrian malls in the conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE





CITY BEAUTIFUL TO CITY PRACTICAL PLAN MAKING FROM 1893-1956

“When we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when these stones will be held sacred because we have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them: ‘See! This our Fathers did for us.’”

- John Ruskin, as quoted on the inside cover the *A Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas*. Harland Bartholomew and Associates. Wichita City Plan Commission, 1923.

“A city plan is a constructive program for the building of a better city. It deals primarily with the material features of the urban structure. Its object is the improvement of living conditions, the stimulation of prosperity, and the creation of intangible values in added health, comfort, convenience, and community well-being. By means of maps, drawings, recommendations, and suggestions, coupled with the will-to-do of the people themselves, the city plan operates to direct the construction of a more suitable physical city. All the measures needed to direct city growth are comprehended in the plan. Fundamentally it is a coordinated series of concrete proposals, a graphic representation of ideas, a statement of guiding principles dealing with problems of civic improvement. The publication of this material is popularly considered to be the chief presentation of the plan. In effect, however, this is merely the initial step. Strong and constant support of the plan is of the utmost importance. A mere collection of maps and drawings has no power of itself to direct city growth and consequently is worth but little.”

- City Planning for Kalamazoo, Harland Bartholomew, 1921³⁵

By the time of his death in 1989 at the age of 100, Harland Bartholomew and his firm had carried out 6,000 professional assignments,³⁶ including countless comprehensive plans for major American cities from the 1920s through the 1950s. Bartholomew’s career

1.1

(opposite page)

A Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita, Kansas. Harland Bartholomew & Associates. The City Plan Commission, Wichita, Kansas, 1923. Courtesy of MIT Libraries

previous page

Nirenstein Atlas, Hollywood, 1956
Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library Visual Collections

35 Eldridge Lovelace. *Harland Bartholomew: His Contributions to American Urban Planning* (Department of Urban and Regional Planning, 1993), A-1.

36 Lovelace, *Harland Bartholomew*, 1.

spanned nearly the entire spectrum of planning from the early twentieth century until his retirement in 1961. Few did more to shape the field during that time, and few have received less recognition in proportion to their contribution.

The fate of Harland Bartholomew is not unlike many of the other plan makers of his era. His rival, Ladislav Segoe of Cincinnati, remains virtually unknown beyond his home city. The landscape architect and pioneering city planner John Nolen, a co-founder of the National Conference on City Planning in 1909 and a prolific practitioner from then through the 1930s, has generally been overlooked. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. would surely have met the same fate had he not borne the name of his father, with whom he is often conflated in spite of his enormous contributions. George B. Ford, E.P. Goodrich, Charles Cheney, Edward Bennett, and George Kessler have all met similar fates in the eyes of history. The history of urban planning shifts from Daniel Burnham's renowned 1909 *Plan for Chicago* to the highway revolt that pitted Robert Moses against Jane Jacobs in the early 1960s without ever dwelling on the figures who produced the majority of plans for American cities in between. The prodigious leap from the aspirational Beaux Arts visionary to the demise of the power broker denies planners a full understanding of how plans came into being, what elements they contained, and how they were received and implemented over the course of the twentieth century.

Stages of Planning

The following chapter briefly digests the stages of American city planning and city plans, utilizing where possible evidence from the four case study cities of this thesis. Plans referenced here include citywide master plans and downtown plans primarily. Regional plans and transportation plans are referred to in certain instances but are not the primary focus of this investigation. Plans are here classified into five general stages:

1. *The Surveyor's Plan*, covering a city's foundation through the late nineteenth century.
2. *The Parks and Boulevards System Plan*, also referred to as the Parks Plan, lasting from the mid-to-late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century.
3. *The City Beautiful Plan*, beginning with the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 and lasting through the early 1930s.
4. *The City Practical Plan*, also referred to as the Comprehensive Plan, beginning just prior to World War I and lasting through the 1950s.

5. *The Urban Renewal Plan*,³⁷ beginning in the late 1940s and ending in the mid-1970s.

While there exists significant overlap in each of these stages, these broad categories were deduced based on observable shifts in archival city plan documents and informed by secondary sources. They are the unique construction of this author and are intended to serve as a simple matrix of major typologies in plan making tailored to this discussion. John Reps' *The Making of Urban America* (Princeton University Press, 1965) and Mel G. Scott's *American City Planning since 1890* (University of California Press, 1969) served as a general guide for the first four phases of planning history and supported those findings that were available in the historical record.

Several qualifications to these criteria should be noted. While the vast majority of cities were platted, not all of these cities had the same level of attention paid to their physical planning. The surveys of Washington D.C., Buffalo, Savannah, and New York, for instance, reflect a level of attention to open space, street layouts, and circulation lacking in conventional surveys, such as the towns planted along the Union Pacific Railroad.

Within each of these broad headings, multiple sub-genres are worth noting. Parks and boulevards system plans, of which Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., Charles Eliot, and George Kessler crafted the most famous examples, including those for Buffalo, Kansas City, and Metropolitan Boston, in some cases dealt with an individual parkway or a string of parks in one section of the city. Boston's Emerald Necklace is an example of this. Park and Boulevard System Plans, furthermore, did not simply disappear from the historical record in the early 1900s. They persisted as a sub-genre within the City Beautiful movement and later during the City Practical era. Likewise, while the City Beautiful began with the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893³⁸ and faded after World War I, its legacy continued through the 1930s and 1940s.³⁹ Among its main adherents were Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Arnold Brunner, and Edward H. Bennett. As might thus be expected, City Practical plans typically contained the elements of the former two genres. Civic Center schemes, for instance, a hallmark of the City Beautiful era (and in some cases, such as Cleveland

37 In later chapters, I will refer mainly to its sub-genres—the Central Business District Plan, the Downtown Plan, and the Central City Plan.

38 Mel G. Scott *American City Planning Since 1890: A History Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Institute Of Planners*. No. 3. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 44-45.

39 Ryan, 316. In "Reading Through a Plan," Brent Ryan discusses John Nolen's 1936 plan for Dubuque, Iowa as a good example of a later plan that still contained certain hallmark elements of a City Beautiful Plan.

Plan Making Timeline

Joseph Elliott

Pierre L'Enfant

Surveyor's Plans

1890s

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.

Horace Cleveland

George Kessler

1860s

Park & Boulevard System Plans

Parkways Plans
Parks Plans

Daniel Burnham

Edward Bennett

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

John Nolan

City Beautiful Plans

Civic Center Plans
Exposition Plans

1893

1930s

Charles Chérey

George B. Ford

Ladislav Sejma

Harland Bartholomew

City Practical Plans

Zoning & Land Use Plans
Thruway/Thoroughfare Plans
(Regional) Comprehensive Plans
Housing Plans

1913

1949

Edward Logue

Edmund Bacon

LM. Pei (planning)

David Wallace

Baron Aechman

Victor Gruen (planning)

Urban Renewal Plans

Downtown/CBD Plans
Urban Renewal Area Plans
Zoning & Land Use Plans
Comprehensive/General Plans

1949

1975

Urban Design Plans

1968

1990s

1860

1880

1890

1900

1910

1920

1930

1940

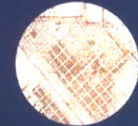
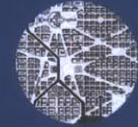
1950

1960

1970

1980

1990





Plan Making before 1956

1791
L'Enfant Plan
1804
Brady Survey
1811
Commissioner's
Plan of Manhattan

Surveyor's Plans

1890s

1800s
Olmsted Plans
Ballston, Chicago
1800s
Olmsted Plans
Ballston, Chicago
1803
Howard, Cleveland, Peab
Olmsted, Minneapolis and Pruit
1803
Kirkham, City
Wheeler Plan
1809
O'Donoghue, City
Dunham Plan

Park & Boulevard System Plans

1860s

Parkways Plans
Parks Plans

1893
Wheeler, Columbus, Exposition
1895
Cleveland, Group Plan
1900
Park of Chicago
1922
Barnett Plan of Buffalo

City Beautiful Plans

1893

Civic Center Plans
Exposition Plans

1913
Hudson, Bartholomew and
the City of Newark
1924
Plan of Wichita, Bartholomew
1925
Plan of Cincinnati, T.C. Spurgeon
1940s
Seeger Plans for San Francisco,
Detroit, Rochester, and Buffalo
1941-1945
Bartholomew plan for
Oklahoma City

City Practical Plans

1913

Thruway/Thoroughfare Plans
(Regional) Comprehensive Plans
Housing Plans

1949

or Buffalo, the focus of the scheme), remained a feature of most city plans through the 1940s and even into the early 1950s.⁴⁰

Beginning in the late 1920s and becoming prevalent in the 1940s, plans began to fracture into isolated layers, such as street or thoroughfare plans, parks plans, housing plans, and regional comprehensive plans. This trend persisted in the urban renewal era. The fragmentation and diversification of the constituent parts of the plan may be explained by increasing specialization, shifting expertise, and the sources of funding for plans over time. In some cases, this condition reflected the dominance of one priority, such as highways, over another, such as parks. Transportation and housing plans, for instance, appeared frequently as separate documents in the 1940s, a reflection of the growing concern about postwar blight and decentralization.

In the 1950s, the sudden proliferation of downtown plans mirrored the anxiety over the health of the retail core. Given such fragmentation, the “urban renewal plan” category is at first glance obviously much too broad. Nonetheless, it marks an important stage and umbrella, since urban renewal funds typically required the creation of plan documents and many comprehensive and general plans were undertaken based on that requirement during this time.⁴¹ In certain cases, central business district plans were commissioned and carried out without the supervision of the City Planning Commission or Redevelopment Authority. Private business coalitions and even individuals, in the case of Fort Worth, sponsored renewal plans that were officially or unofficially adopted by the city.⁴² The private sector leadership of the planning process for central business districts, and its subsequent influence in winning urban renewal funds for cities, marked one important finding in this study.

Case Study Plans and their Antecedents

The list below reflects those plans that will be discussed for each case study city. The case study plan itself has been highlighted in bold. As mentioned briefly in the introduction, case study plans were selected based on several criteria. In the case of Fort Worth and Fresno, these plans marked the apex of Victor Gruen Associates’ downtown planning work. The exemplary nature of both of these plans led to their selection. Plans from the latter two cities, Oklahoma City and Buffalo, were selected based on the author’s

40 The Civic Center persisted as a vestigial element of the Comprehensive Plan until the Central Business District plan effectively replaced it in the 1950s. See discussion in Chapter 4.

41 *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966.), 455.

42 While Fort Worth provides one example of this phenomenon, the *Plan for the Central Business District of Baltimore* (1959) by the Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc. offers another variation.

judgment that each provided a valuable comparison or counterpoint to the Gruen work as well as a fair reflection of the changing tenets of downtown renewal at their time of publication. The Gruen Plan for Fort Worth and the Pei Plan for Oklahoma City are both exceptional and unique, with few immediate comparisons, in spite of their importance. The Fresno and the Buffalo plans, meanwhile, may be considered more archetypal. Thus, while Fresno represented one of Gruen's most successful plans and projects, it nevertheless followed a pattern similar to other Gruen plans from that era. The same can be said for the Buffalo plan.

The selection of I.M. Pei & Associates and Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (WMRT) emanated from careful research and a thorough assessment of plans from this era. I.M. Pei, and the Pei Plan for Oklahoma City specifically, provided an excellent contrast to Gruen's Fort Worth plan. Pei and Gruen's urban renewal work moved in parallel, with both designing early shopping centers and then eventually moving into urban renewal plans. The two worked on adjacent plans in central Boston in the 1960s and were similarly influential both as architects and planners, though Pei had more longevity and overall impact in architecture. The Oklahoma City plan was a unique commission for Pei since it was the only time that he was hired to create a plan for an entire central business district. While his Government Center plan for Boston, Erieview plan for Cleveland, and plans for Southwest Washington D.C. were seminal in this period, they were sub-area plans rather than downtown plans per se. Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (WMRT), meanwhile, was one of the most influential and prolific firms in the United States from the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, beginning with their Plan for the Valleys (1964) and Inner Harbor Plan (1964) and continuing with their famous Lower Manhattan Plan (1966) and downtown plans for Buffalo, Miami, and New Orleans.⁴³ The firm's downtown work, spearheaded by David Wallace and the urban designer Thomas A. Todd, is significant both because of Wallace's career and influence in plan making spanned virtually the entire period of study and because Todd conveyed a design language reminiscent of the Gruen plans, an observation that merited further investigation. The work of many other planners and designers, such as Edmund Bacon, Barton-Aschman Associates, and Lawrence Halprin, was also analyzed, and will be discussed briefly in the thesis.

⁴³ See David A. Wallace. *Urban Planning My Way: From Baltimore's Inner Harbor to Lower Manhattan and Beyond* (Washington, DC: APA Planners Press, 2004), 174. David Wallace's legacy as a planner was overshadowed by that of his partner in the firm, Ian McHarg, who was later ousted from the practice. The failure of many planners to recall the legacy of David Wallace may be best reflected in a correspondence Wallace recounts between himself and Carol Willis in 2003. Willis, in undertaking a reprinting the Lower Manhattan Plan in the wake of September 11, neglected to contact Wallace or Todd. Wallace expressed his outrage at this gesture in a terse letter printed in his memoir.

Case 1: Fort Worth, Texas

Plan Title	Year	Author(s)
Parks and Boulevards System Plan for Fort Worth, Texas	1909	George Kessler
Streets Plan	1927	Harland Bartholomew & Associates
A Comprehensive System of Parks for Fort Worth, Texas	1930	Hare & Hare
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow	1956	Victor Gruen Associates
A Proposal for the Core Area	1966	Fort Worth AIA Chapter
Fort Worth CBD Sector Report	1971	Lawrence Halprin Associates

Case 2: Fresno, California

Plan Title	Year	Author(s)
General Report on Progress of a City Plan for Fresno	1918	Charles Cheney
A Report on a Preliminary General Plan for the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area	1957	Fresno-Clovis Planning Commission
Central Area Fresno Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation	1960	Victor Gruen Associates

Case 3: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Plan Title	Year	Author(s)
Oklahoma City: A Report on its Plan for an Outer Parkway and a Plan for an Interior System of Parks and Boulevards	1909	W.H. Dunn
The City Plan for Oklahoma City	1930	Hare & Hare
The Comprehensive City Plan	1944-1949	Harland Bartholomew & Associates
General Neighborhood Renewal Plan: Central Business District, Oklahoma City	1964	I.M. Pei & Associates
Central City Plan	1975	Gruen Associates

Case 4: Buffalo, New York

Plan Title	Year	Author(s)
Parks and Parkways System	1868-1896	Frederick Law Olmsted, Calvert Vaux
Buffalo: Report on the City Plan and Public Building Sites	1922	Edward Bennett, William Parsons
Buffalo's Waterfront Today...and Tomorrow	1939	Walter Behrendt
Urban Area Report on the New York State Thruway and Arterial Routes in the Buffalo Area	1946	New York State Department of Public Works, Ladislav Segoe
Buffalo Downtown Study: A Report to the City of Buffalo and the Greater Buffalo Development Foundation	1960	Arthur D. Little Company
Downtown Renewal Study: Plans and Recommendations	1966	John Graham & Company
The Regional Center: A Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York	1971	Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd

The Surveyor's Plan

Prior to its emergence and professionalization in the 1920s, the functions of city planning were carried about by a variety of different experts, including surveyors, landscape architects, architects, and civil engineers. John W. Reps, in his 1965 book *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States*, provides an exhaustive history of early surveying.⁴⁴ Writing of Penn's 1682 Plan for Philadelphia, Reps writes, "there are remarkable similarities between the Philadelphia pattern and earlier city planning concepts and achievements... The application of the gridiron pattern for colonial towns was well established. Spanish towns consistently followed this type of plan... But perhaps most influential in furnishing the ideas on which the plan of Philadelphia was based was... the reconstruction of London after the Great Fire of 1666."⁴⁵ Prior to the late 1800s, only the city of Philadelphia had powers that could be constituted as "planning." Philadelphia benefitted from the passage of the Act of Surveyors and Regulators, passed by the colonial assembly in 1721. This Act conferred on an official surveyor the power to enforce street and building lines,⁴⁶ powers of civic regulation that were almost wholly absent elsewhere until the enabling acts in the 1920s.⁴⁷ While cities such as Philadelphia, New Haven, Williamsburg, Annapolis, Charleston, and Savannah provide evidence of careful, sophisticated layouts before the industrial revolution, the scale of these plans remained relatively small and their formal arrangements based on a modified orthogonal grid.

The most significant act of city planning prior to the industrial revolution in America was the plan for the Capital by the French architect Pierre L'Enfant, aided by the surveyor Andrew Ellicott. Reps describes L'Enfant's plan for Washington as "a vast essay on civic development" and sources his inspiration for the plan to precedents in the European Baroque such as Versailles in France.⁴⁸ Along with his plan for the Capital, L'Enfant composed a memorandum on the principal uses of land contrived as part of the scheme. "Shops were to be located in two areas: one along 'the streets from the grand avenue to the palace and towards the canal'; and the other along the street running directly east from the Capitol. In this latter area we are told that the sidewalk 'on each side will pass under an Arched way, under whose cover Shops will be most conveniently and agreeably

44 John William Reps. *The Making of Urban America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965).

45 Reps, 163.

46 Scott, *American City Planning*, 5.

47 Ibid, 12.

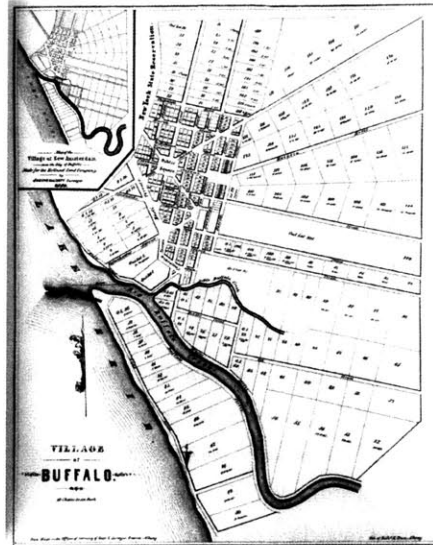
48 Reps, 252.

1.2

(left)

Plan of Buffalo, New York. Joseph Ellicott, 1804.

John William Reps. *The Making of Urban America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965).



suites.”⁴⁹ Reps suggests that this arrangement was likely derived from L’Enfant’s observation of shops facing the gardens of the Palais-Royale in Paris. L’Enfant’s grandiose plan for Washington incited a number of other cities to pursue Baroque-inspired plans of their own, including Buffalo in 1802 (planned by Joseph Ellicott, the brother of L’Enfant’s successor in the Capital), Detroit in 1807, Indianapolis in 1821, and Madison, Wisconsin in 1836.⁵⁰ While many cities modified their original plans with gridiron layouts that eliminated the diagonals over time, baroque city planning enjoyed resurgence in the late nineteenth century.⁵¹

Frederick Law Olmsted, George Kessler and the Parks and Boulevards Plans

The baroque plans of Washington D.C., Buffalo, and Detroit remained exceptions among cities in the nineteenth century. Most cities and regions had been callously subdivided into grids “without any regard to the situation of the ground.”⁵² By the 1850s, however, the rising tide of industry and the incipient congestion of cities precipitated a response to

49 Reps, 252.

50 Ibid, 269; 274; 276

51 “Architecture in the United States,” *American Journal of Science and Arts* (New Haven, 1830), XVII, 101.

An anonymous contributor summed up the state of planning in 1830 as such. “My remarks will also take a wider range, and embrace a science, for which I cannot find a name, for the good reason, that among nations from which we draw our language, no such science could be known. I mean the choice of position, and the planning of towns, with the grounds and appurtenances connected with them... We have yet to choose the sites of what are to be large towns and cities, in a generation or two: we have to plan them, with full choice as to convenience or beauty in these things... Let no one urge that we are not prepared for these things; that they require wealth and leisure, which we have not for them; and that business, not taste, must engross the attention of a young nation. We are prepared for them. It is as easy in planning a town to consult good taste and beauty as not to do it, and unless this is done now, the odds are greatly against its ever being done.”

52 Reps, 294 citing Francis Bailey, *Journal of a Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 and 1797* (London, 1856), 105.

the state of the environment. The earliest forerunners to city planning were landscape architects including Frederick Law Olmsted and Horace W.S. Cleveland. Cleveland, lesser known than Olmsted, was a prophetic voice of comprehensive planning and composed parks plans for Minneapolis-St. Paul and Omaha in the 1880s and 1890s. In 1873, he “observed with dismay how railroad surveyors laid out towns with ‘no regard...to the topography of the ground; no reference...to the future interests or necessities of business or pleasure; no effort...to secure the preservation of natural features which in time might be invaluable as a means of giving to the place a distinct and unique character.’”⁵³

Frederick Law Olmsted, meanwhile, established a practice of landscape architecture with his partner Calvert Vaux following their winning proposal for the Central Park (Greensward) in 1858. The Central Park commission emerged out of growing consensus that the unrestricted development of the American city, left unchecked, could dislocate people from their natural surroundings. Irresponsible development and the exploitation of natural resources, they believed, could spell the eventual deterioration of human life unless effectively planned for in the order of cities. Isolated in a thinly populated section of the city’s gridiron,⁵⁴ Central Park constituted an important shift in thinking about the long-term health of cities and incited a trend towards large scale parks planning that quickly spread to Buffalo, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, and Boston.⁵⁵

Among the cities to call upon Olmsted and Vaux’s services was Buffalo in 1868. Concerned with the city’s increasingly squalid conditions in the wake of industrialization, Buffalo city leaders retained Olmsted and Vaux to prepare a Metropolitan Park System Plan, the firm’s first citywide planning commission.⁵⁶ Buffalo’s park system connected a large park in the northern section of the city to the south via a network of parkways modeled on Olmsted’s Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York. A similar model was proposed around the same time in Chicago. In the late 1860s, a 2,240 acre park system was proposed, responding in part to the city’s cholera epidemic. Olmsted and Vaux completed a design for the southern parks (Jackson and Washington Parks, as well as the Midway Plaisance), while their contemporary William Le Baron Jenney, better known as the

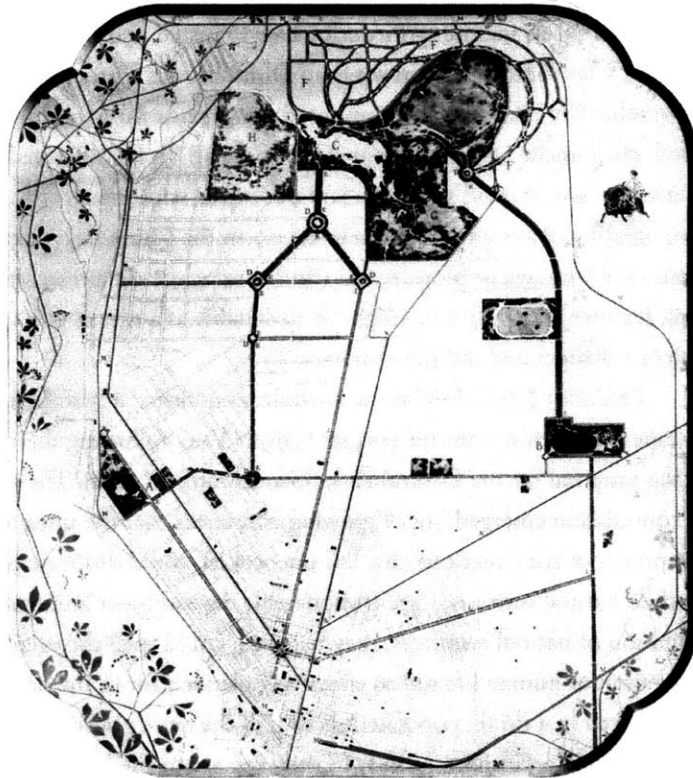
53 Scott, 12 from Horace W.S. Cleveland, *Landscape Architecture as Applied to the Wants of the West*, ed. Roy Lubove (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1965), 52.

54 At the time of its construction, the Central Park area contained the site of Seneca Village, which was notably home to a thriving community of 250 African-Americans and Irish Immigrants during the 1850s. This settlement was cleared to make way for the park. See Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar. *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

55 M. Christine Boyer. *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 35.

56 Francis R. Kowsky *The Best Planned City in the World: Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo Park System* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 17.

1.3
(right)
Frederick Law Olmsted, Map of
Parks and Parkways System for
Buffalo, New York, 1868.
Courtesy of the National Park
Service, Frederick Law Olmsted
National Historic Site.



architect and engineer of the first skyscraper, produced a plan for three large parks in western Chicago (present day Humboldt, Garfield, and Douglas Parks), with connections to the northern and southern parks via a system of boulevards. Before the turn of the century, Olmsted had drafted large-scale park system plans for Milwaukee, Louisville, and Boston, along with a score of proposals for large parks, campuses, and estates.

Olmsted's success paved the way for a second generation of landscape architect-city planners that emerged in the late nineteenth century. The first of these to achieve nationwide success was George Kessler, who had studied civic and landscape design in Europe before returning to work in Kansas City, Missouri. Kessler worked briefly under Olmsted in the 1860s on a citywide system of parks and parkways for San Francisco,⁵⁷ but went on to establish his own practice in Kansas City where he became a pioneer in the design of parks and boulevards systems across the Midwest. Kessler's plans for Cincinnati, Dallas, Fort Worth, Indianapolis, and other cities provide evidence of an evolution from parks systems toward more comprehensive planning and roadway design. His 1893 plan for Kansas City's Park Board, for instance, arguably

57 Scott, 15.

represented the first detailed exercise in modern comprehensive planning,⁵⁸ documenting not only the location of parks and boulevards, but of existing density, traffic, and topography, as well as projected growth.

W.H. Dunn and the Plan for Oklahoma City

Exemplary of parks and boulevards system plans from the turn of the twentieth century is W.H. Dunn's *Oklahoma City: A Report on its Plan for an Outer Parkway and a Plan for an Interior System of Parks and Boulevards*, published in 1909. Dunn, who had worked under George Kessler prior to his Oklahoma City commission, was the superintendent of parks in Kansas City. Though his plan was published in the same year as the seminal 1909 *Plan of Chicago*, as a parks plan, it follows the basic structure and framework of that genre. Dunn's plan for Oklahoma City justified the necessity for planning on the basis of projected population growth and unabated real estate speculation.⁵⁹ At the outset of the study, he extensively documented the conditions of existing lands, with a focus on preserving the bucolic pasture land at the outskirts, which he suggested that "the city should not hesitate to secure."⁶⁰ At the same time, Dunn grappled with the pressures of new technologies, including a well-organized bid from local auto enthusiasts for an automobile speedway encircling the city, similar to one that had recently been constructed in Long Island, New York.⁶¹ Illustrations of the plan show both the proposed boulevards and the speedway in section and perspective, including large black and white plates of the most significant parks and a citywide map illustrating the outer circumferential boulevard in green and internal, secondary parks and boulevards in orange. The plan even called for a "subway" (underpass) to allow traffic to pass beneath the circumferential boulevard unimpeded, an unusual and innovative piece of infrastructure, even in 1909.

The Dunn plan is striking for both its nod to convention and its thrust towards the future. The outer speedway suggests the embryonic form of the circumferential highway that would later emerge and provides a basic framework for primary and secondary circulation. While the boulevards designed by Dunn echo Parisian thoroughfares delineated in the Beaux Arts tradition, his focus on circulation foreshadowed the gradual transition from parks and parkways to street widenings and highways.

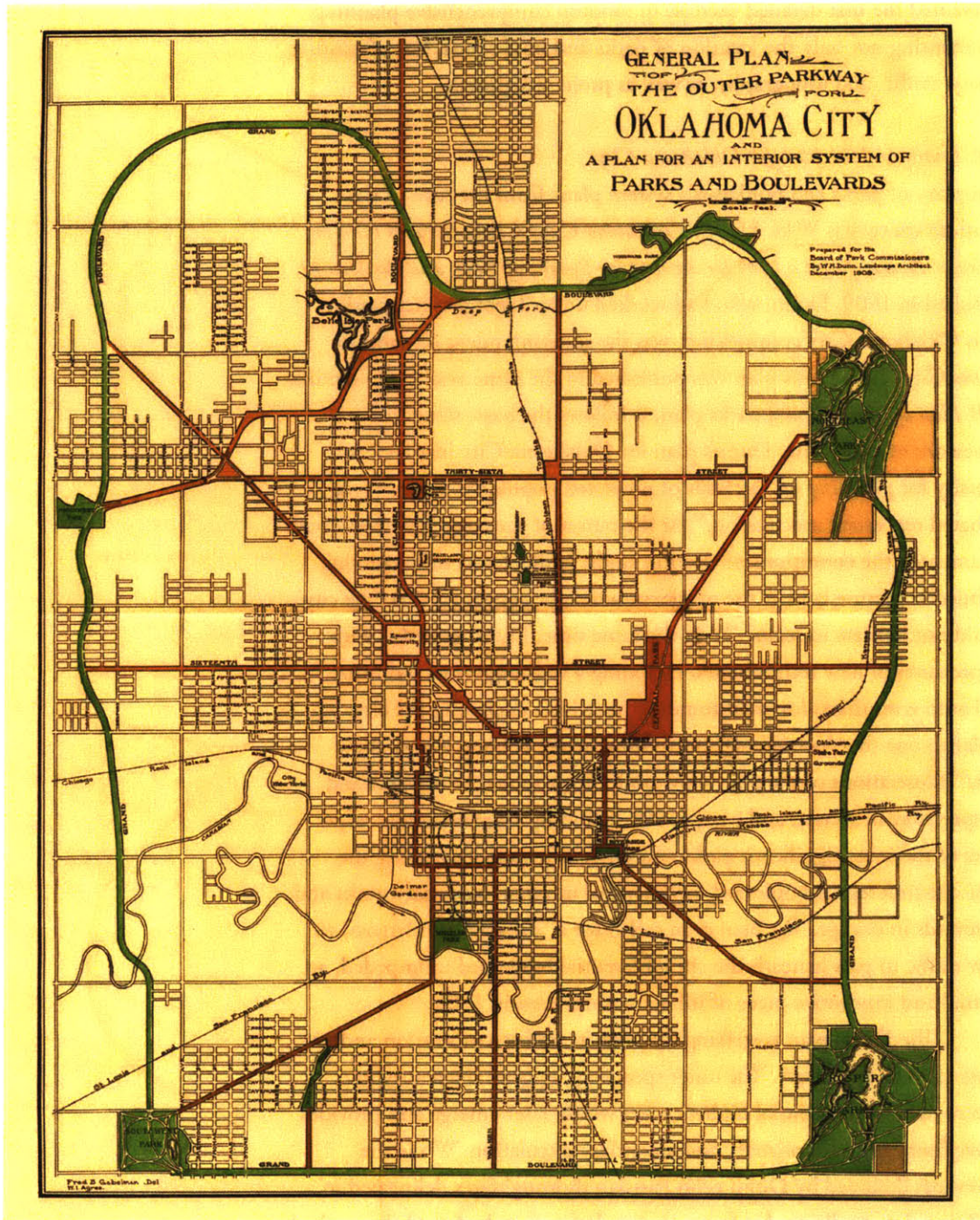
58 Scott, 15.

59 W. H. Dunn. *Oklahoma City: A Report on Its Plan for an Outer Parkway and a Plan for an Interior System of Parks and Boulevards* (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma City Parks Commission, 1910), 10.

60 Dunn, 7.

61 Dunn, 12-13. See Blair Humphreys. "The Early Planning and Development of Oklahoma City" (Cambridge, MA: MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Unpublished Master's Thesis, 2009).

Dunn, 8. The plan acknowledges previous work completed by a separate consultant, referred to only as Mr. Brownell, to consider a route for an "automobile driveway" encircling the city.



1.4
*General Plan of the Outer Parkway for
Oklahoma City and a Plan for an Interior
System of Parks and Boulevards.*
W.H. Dunn, 1909.
Credit: Blair Humphreys

Large scale Parks and Boulevards System Plans such as those produced by Kessler, Dunn, and their contemporaries responded to a growing awareness of the deleterious state of American cities by the late nineteenth century and the prevailing idea that the physical environment had contributed to antisocial tendencies, crime, and disease. Industrialization, increased immigration, squalid tenements, and devastating fires had brought the crisis of the American city to the fore. “As society advanced, as people were increasingly alienated from nature,” writes M. Christine Boyer, “the artificial urban environment became the cause of social sickness that multiplied in greater proportion, diseases that seemed to create new species and forms with every bend and turn of the political and economic structure.”⁶² The proactive response to the squalor evident in American cities manifested itself in two primary ways. The first was the emergence of a progressive reform movement, which consisted of “muckraking” journalists such as the photojournalist Jacob Riis, women’s civic improvement societies, and settlement house workers such as Jane Addams in Chicago. The second was a growing awareness and increasing pressure to relieve the city of its chaos through physical transformation and infrastructure programs.

The impetus for a physical reshaping of American cities in the late nineteenth century can be attributed to multiple precedents. As early as 1666, the Great Fire of London had caused comprehensive reform in building regulations and preempted Christopher Wren’s famous plan for London (1666). While Wren’s plans were highly influential in their time and for centuries afterward, two nineteenth century physical planning exercises had more immediate influence upon the American imagination—Baron Haussmann’s reconstruction of Paris (1853-1870) and Ildefons Cerdà’s plan for the extension of Barcelona (1859).⁶³ By the mid-nineteenth century, European cities were actively removing old ramparts and ravelins rendered obsolete in the age of long-range artillery. The removal of these walls created an opportunity to redesign of large tracts of land immediately outside the old medieval cores. In many cities, these tracts were transformed into grand civic spaces for institutions, amusement parks, and parade grounds. Copenhagen’s Tivoli Gardens (1843) and Vienna’s Ringstrasse (1857) are two of the most notable outcomes of this movement in Europe. The transformation of European cities such as Paris, Barcelona, and Vienna in the mid-nineteenth century provided a template that American cities could refer to as they sought out ways to manage growth and control the squalor in their midst. These models would prove

62 Boyer, 16.

63 Ibid, 44.

formidable in the imagination of the architects of the City Beautiful, who found in Europe the pomp and splendor so glaringly absent in American cities.

Towards a City Beautiful

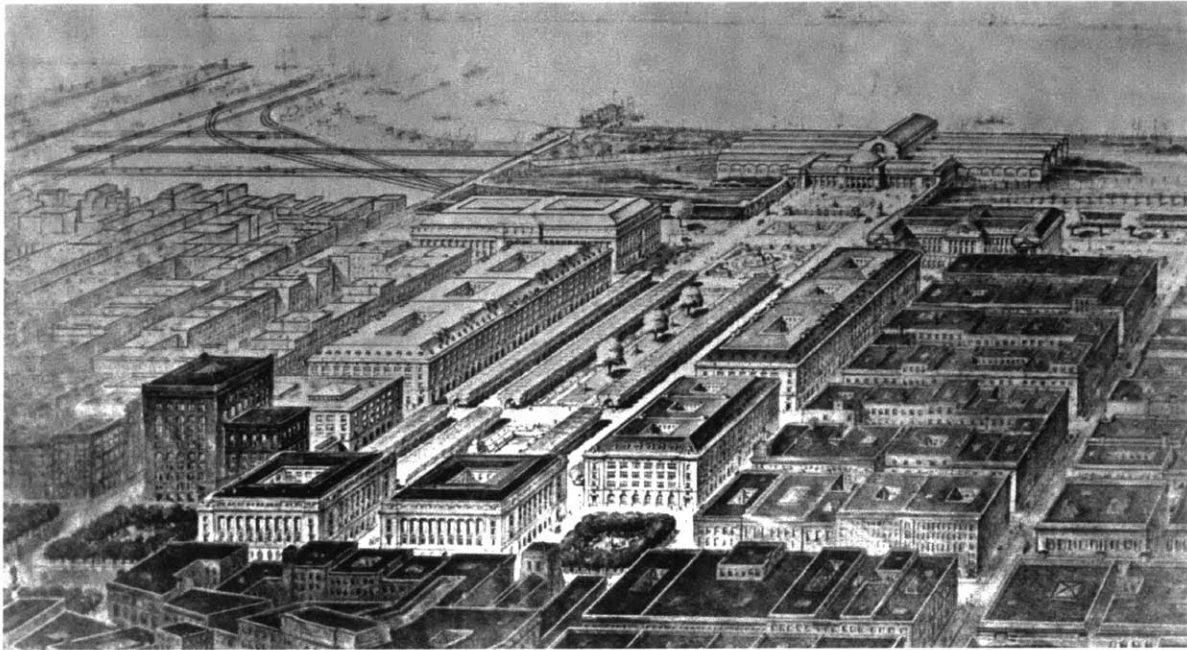
Daniel Burnham and The World's Columbian Exposition

While the nineteenth century parks movement had begun to forge a link between the construction of natural beauty and planning for urban growth, the majority of parks developed in this era remained isolated from the city at large and possessed an internal logic that largely rejected it. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 on Chicago's southern lakefront changed all of this by bringing together the major landscape architects of the parks movement with an emerging generation of architects engaged in civic commissions and grand building programs. In the twenty years prior to the Fair's opening in 1893, Daniel Burnham, its coordinating architect, had designed buildings for Chicago's corporate elite, including the famous 1888 Rookery building in Chicago's loop, one of the city's first skyscrapers. In the twenty years after the fair, Burnham would be commissioned to draft plans for cities including Washington D.C. (1902), Cleveland (1903), San Francisco (1905), Chicago (1909), and Baguio and Manila (1905) in the Philippines. If the fair, for which he is described as its "organizing genius," awakened in Burnham an interest in the larger urban environment,⁶⁴ its impact on the aspirations of cities around the United States resounded even greater.

The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 witnessed the confluence of the first and second chapters of American city planning. On the site where Olmsted and Vaux had two decades earlier designed their southern park system (which remained unfinished at the time), Daniel Burnham coordinated the production of a Beaux Arts complex meant to evoke imperial grandeur, with a herculean statue of a triumphant *Republic* presiding over the central court. The combination of parks systems designed in the English landscape tradition embraced by Olmsted with civic complexes and city plans rendered in the language of the Beaux Arts would emerge as the defining characteristic and aspiration of American cities from the start of the twentieth century through the 1920s.

The response to the Exposition was immediate, even if its impact manifested itself slowly over time. In 1895, enchanted by the vision of the fair, a cohort of young architects from Cleveland held a competition for the design of a group of public buildings on the shores of Lake Erie. The design of Cleveland's Group Plan, as it would eventually be called, fell to Daniel

64 Scott, 39.



Burnham. The Group Plan reflected the “aesthetic rather than analytical or ‘scientific’”⁶⁵ foundation of city planning during the City Beautiful period. As early city planner and reformer Charles Mulford Robinson stated in 1899, the Chicago exposition had “revealed a yearning toward a condition which we had not yet reached... The fair gave tangible shape to a desire that was arising out of the larger wealth, the commoner travel, and the provision of the essentials of life...”⁶⁶

If the Columbian Exposition can be pointed to as the spark that ignited the City Beautiful movement, it was the work of municipal societies and civic improvement programs, typically run by women, which sustained that momentum. As Alison Isenberg writes in *Downtown America*, “women initiated or endorsed countless projects to beautify and regulate commercial districts, from requiring street paving to sponsoring comprehensive city plans.”⁶⁷ Civic leagues led by women also helped ground the emerging field of city planning in the United States, with clubs sponsoring lectures by early city planning consultants like John Nolen and Charles Mulford Robinson.⁶⁸ In substantiating these early experts, women helped to educate Americans about the importance of civic housekeeping, beautification, and municipal improvement. The role

1.5

The Group Plan of the Public Buildings of the City of Cleveland.
Daniel H. Burnham, John M. Carrere, and Arnold W. Brunner, 1903. Courtesy of the Western Reserve Historical Society

65 Scott, 43.

66 Ibid, 45 from Charles Mulford Robinson. “Improvement in City Life, III. Aesthetic Progress,” *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXIII (June, 1899), 771.

67 Alison Isenberg. *Downtown America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press Economics Books, 2005), 23.

68 Isenberg, 26.

of women in attracting (and often financing) early planning consultants was gradually overshadowed by that of men's commercial clubs and chambers of commerce, who often assumed credit for the civic plan and led the commissions later calling for their implementation. In the hands of businessmen and politicians, the imperative driving the City Beautiful shifted from "civic housekeeping" towards the enhancement of property values.⁶⁹

The early city planning movement was characterized by tensions between business interests and civic reform, as well as those between progressive settlement house advocates and city beautiful builders. As M.G. Scott suggests, "The 'City Beautiful' movement now capturing their imagination was but a continuation or broadening of the park and boulevard movements, augmented by a fresh interest in malls, lordly public buildings, and all the street furnishings—fountains, ornamental benches, statues, and memorials—common in European cities."⁷⁰ Yet while women's leagues and reformers may have been slow to harness the momentum of early city planning, by the early 1900s, cities around the United States actively sought to emulate the trappings of civic beauty associated with incipient modernization.

Planning the City Beautiful

The first decade of the twentieth century was marked by significant progress in the City Beautiful movement, beginning with the McMillan Plan for Washington D.C. and ending with Chicago's seminal city plan in 1909. Spearheaded by the U.S. Senator James McMillan of Michigan, who had been a member of Detroit's park commission when Olmsted designed Belle Isle Park, the McMillan Plan commemorated the moving of the United States Capital from Philadelphia to Washington D.C. and the plan by Pierre L'Enfant. Though L'Enfant's plans for Washington had been deviated from in significant ways since the original proposition (especially after he was fired and the plan was rationalized by the surveyor Andrew Ellicott), the skeleton of the plan remained intact, save for some of its central features, including the Washington Mall. The Senate Park Commission engaged Daniel Burnham, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.,⁷¹ the architect Charles McKim, and the sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens to prepare a plan that would not only connect the disparate park system of the region, but also advance the dramatic civic vision laid out by L'Enfant at the turn of the last century. Scott (1969) offers a salient critique of the

69 Isenberg, 36.

70 Scott, 46

71 Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. had taken ill and died in 1903.

overbearing classical aphorisms of the McMillan Plan—“The Washington of the Senate Park Commission—a kind of national civic center in a vernacular city in which that harbinger of dispersion, the automobile, had already made its prophetic appearance—was to be an historical artifact, an elaborate set piece immune to the whims of time and chance, a sacrosanct expression of the national past and the national destiny, though there was nothing about it that so much as suggested the influence of the rough frontier...In a nation undergoing enormous changes, ‘the large design’ promised, indeed demanded, immutability, at least outwardly, in the heart of the capital.”⁷²

Washington D.C. was not alone in its desire for grandeur and immutability in the face of a changing society. Taking initiative on behalf of the City and County, the Association for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco⁷³ engaged Burnham and his lesser-known partner Edward H. Bennett (who would later go on to a successful career himself following Burnham’s death) to develop a plan for the city in 1905. Philadelphia, following an earlier proposal from the 1890s, devised a plan for a major axial route connecting City Hall to Fairmount Park, the result of which is today’s Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The New York City Improvement Commission engaged Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to draft a plan that was submitted to the city in 1907 and largely ignored thereafter.⁷⁴ Cleveland’s Group Plan, implemented after its initial conception in the 1890s, was led by Burnham, Arnold Brunner, and the architect John Carrere, who had himself led the design of the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York in 1901.⁷⁵ The Cleveland Plan, notably, was also devised as a slum clearance effort and a deliberate attempt to “outwit” local real estate developers who saw benefit in spreading public buildings “to divide the benefit of their presence.”⁷⁶

The City Beautiful was driven by a combination of business elites pragmatically concerned with the fate of their cities and social reformers espousing programs of environmental therapy for the poor and downtrodden. In spite of their scale and intent, these plans essentially proposed a similar formula, based on the promise of restoring the city through civic building programs and cohesive parks systems. Though certain plans conveyed the necessity of thinking comprehensively about traffic, density, and to a degree, land use, such as the 1893 Kessler Plan for

72 Scott, 54.

73 Ibid, 64.

74 Ibid, 57.

75 The Chicago Exposition set off a numerous imitators in the years that followed, including expositions held in Omaha (1898), Buffalo (1901), St. Louis (1904), Portland (1905), Seattle (1909), San Diego (1915), and San Francisco (1915).

76 Scott, 62-63.

Kansas City, these were atypical.

While criticized for its emphasis on the aesthetic relationships of civic form, the City Beautiful movement incubated the thought leaders of American city planning—or at the very least, of the American physical planning tradition. Charles Mulford Robinson, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Edward Bennett, and the landscape architect John Nolen all rose to prominence during the first decade of the twentieth century, articulating a civic vision that would become the foundation for modern city planning over the following two decades.

In Search of Comprehensiveness: John Nolen and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

In an article co-authored in the journal *Charities and The Commons*, a journal of social work, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and John Nolen began to devise more systematic processes for evaluating the needs of cities and their constituent parts. In the article, they recommended six classes of open space, including streets, boulevards, and parkways; city squares, commons, and public gardens; playgrounds of three kinds—for little children, for children of school age, and for youths and young adults; small neighborhood parks; large in-city parks; and great outlying reservations.⁷⁷ The systematization and classification of open space echoed ideas concurrently being advanced by social reformers like Jane Addams and Jacob Riis, who “envisaged every neighborhood or district of a city utilizing its public school as a social and educational center,” a precursor to Clarence Perry’s Neighborhood Unit (1929).⁷⁸

The first plan to be transformed into “an instrument of social planning” was issued by the Committee on Civic Centers of the St. Louis league in 1907. Looking forward to the year 1925, *A City Plan for St. Louis* (1907) offered a prophetic and compelling vision for the goal of establishing neighborhood centers that would “tend toward the development of better citizenship.” While it retained the dress and grandeur of a City Beautiful plan, the St. Louis plan addressed the “indiscriminate herding together of large masses of human beings ignorant of the simplest laws of sanitation, the evils of child labor, the corruption in political life, and, above all, the weakening of the ties which bind together the home.”⁷⁹ The St. Louis plan demonstrated how to lay the groundwork for more comprehensive reform and enable planners to educate their clients

⁷⁷ Scott, 72.

⁷⁸ Ibid. The Neighborhood Unit by Clarence Perry was a part of the Regional Plan for New York and its Environs. The basic concept of a unit-based plan was to devise and plan for institutional and community services at the scale of the neighborhood. The unit built off of Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City movement in Britain and looked to prototypes including Forest Hills Garden in Queens as a successful model neighborhood structure.

⁷⁹ Scott, 75. Civic League of St. Louis, *A City Plan for St. Louis* (St. Louis, 1907), 37

of the need for a more systematic understanding of how the physical and social city intersect.⁸⁰ “Park commissioners who engaged Nolen or Olmsted or Kessler to prepare plans for park systems invariably became interested in other public improvements,” as they did in Minneapolis, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis.⁸¹ In some cases, such as Milwaukee, early parks commissions expanded their scope into city planning after only a few years. Among the significant results of the City Beautiful era was the emergence of City Planning Commissions, the first of which was established in 1907 in Hartford, Connecticut. These commissions had the power to make “maps of the city showing locations proposed for new public buildings, streets, boulevards, esplanades, parkways, squares, and parks...”⁸² The commission, however, and others that followed, still lacked authority over private land. Only Pennsylvania, based on its 1721 Act, retained any power to regulate building and lot lines.

While the City Beautiful elevated ideals of civic beauty, its detractors found it lacking in attention to more obvious social plights. Leading intellectuals in the movement became disenchanted with the neo-classical model copied in civic centers around the country.⁸³ John Nolen, for his part, was most concerned with the practical elements of rehabilitation and improvement—“the widening of streets, providing diagonal thoroughfares, extensively rehabilitating housing, restructuring the occupancy and use of private property, rerouting street railways, diverting traffic from heavily traveled streets at certain hours of the day, removing poles, wires, and unsightly advertising.”⁸⁴ These concerns would manifest regularly in plans that Nolen prepared for his clients throughout the late 1920s and 1930s. In time, the civic centers, once the centerpiece of the planning report, would be reduced to almost a footnote amidst a collection of maps and data. Yet in the early 1900s, as cities were still jockeying for their turn at hosting the next world’s fair, city planners remained tethered to the grand gestures of the Beaux Arts.

The 1909 Plan of Chicago

Ironically, the plan most frequently associated with the City Beautiful movement, the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* by Daniel Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, was arguably published toward the end of that era. Published the same year that Harvard University offered its first course in City Planning and of the first meeting of the National Conference on City Planning in

80 Scott, 78.

81 Ibid, 78.

82 Ibid, 80.

83 Ibid, 98.

84 Ibid, 98. *City Planning*, U.S. 61st Congress, 2nd Session, S. Document 422 (1910), 75.

Washington D.C., the plan was sponsored by the Commercial Club of Chicago, an association of civic elites and business interests. The Burnham Plan, as it came to be known, was printed in a quarto volume with 142 illustrations. It contained many elements typical of the City Beautiful planning program, including axial boulevards evocative of Haussmann's Paris, uniform cornice lines, and an immense central dome that loomed over a sprawling central agora. While it strove to enshrine the memory of Columbian Exposition as a permanent center of government, the plan also looked forward. It was regional in its orientation, envisioning Chicago as the center of an area extending from Indiana and Wisconsin. In addition to the Lakeshore pleasure drives and parkways were proposals for the relocation and consolidation of rail yards and passenger terminals. Still, these pragmatic elements were overshadowed by the enduring images of an "American Paris on the shores of Lake Michigan," drafted by the American-born painter and illustrator Jules Guérin, who had been born in St. Louis but was trained in Paris. "In many respects the Chicago of the Burnham plan is a city of a past that America never knew," says M.G. Scott (1969), "notwithstanding the facilities for transportation and transit, the network of roadways for automobiles, and the generous provision of recreation areas for the people. It is an essentially aristocratic city, pleasing to the merchant princes who participated in its conception but not meeting some of the basic economic and human needs."⁸⁵

Behind the veneer of civic beautification and reform laid an ingrained belief that the physical environment had a direct impact on the social, physical, and mental health of its citizens. Progressives believed that "aesthetic environments would help to influence the moral and intellectual improvement of the whole social order,"⁸⁶ and that the "curative power of fresh air and natural scenery were needed...for the physical relaxation and physical regeneration of the people, to breathe health and hope into the poor and downtrodden."⁸⁷ The City Beautiful, as the parks movement had before it, expressed hope in the prospect of environmental determinism and subscribed to the belief that the reconditioning of a city's physical plant was the first step in the path to societal reform. Not until after World War I would planners begin to question this basic assumption, and even then, until the 1970s, most planning reports remained partly entrenched in a pattern of answering social and economic problem with physical solutions.

85 Scott, 108.

86 Ibid, 45.

87 Ibid, 38.

Edward H. Bennett and the 1922 Plan for Buffalo

Edward H. Bennett's *Buffalo: Report on the City Plan and Public Building Sites* (1922),⁸⁸ though developed well after the initial burst of City Beautiful plans and proposals, remains a good exemplar of the genre. Buffalo, as previously mentioned, was one of the first cities to emulate the success of the Chicago Exposition with a fair of its own, the Pan-American Exposition of 1901. Bennett acted as Burnham's chief assistant from 1905 onward and served as the lead designer on most of the major planning commissions he received.⁸⁹ His major commissions included plans for San Francisco, Chicago, and Manila, completed with Burnham, as well as plans for Minneapolis-St. Paul, Brooklyn, Buffalo, and Portland, Oregon, carried out after Burnham's death. Bennett's plans for Buffalo and other cities are distinguished in large part by his consistent collaboration with the famous delineator Jules Guérin.⁹⁰

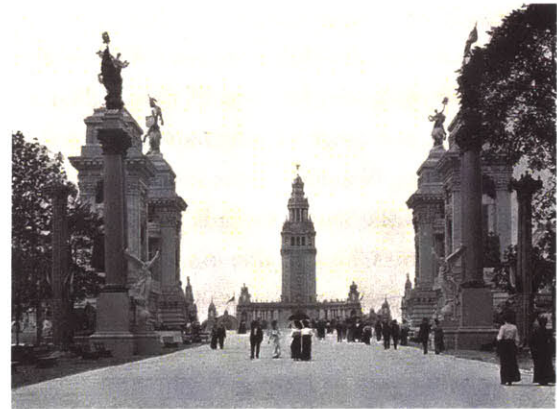
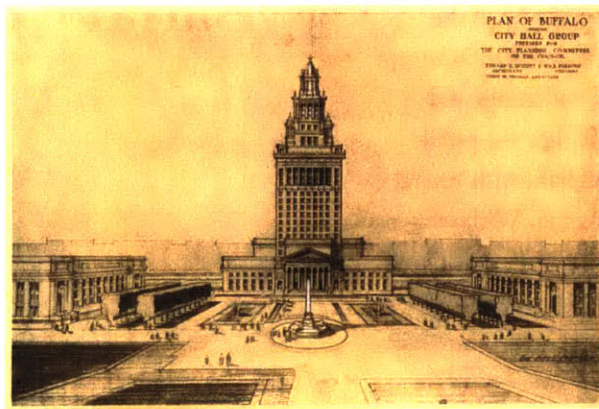
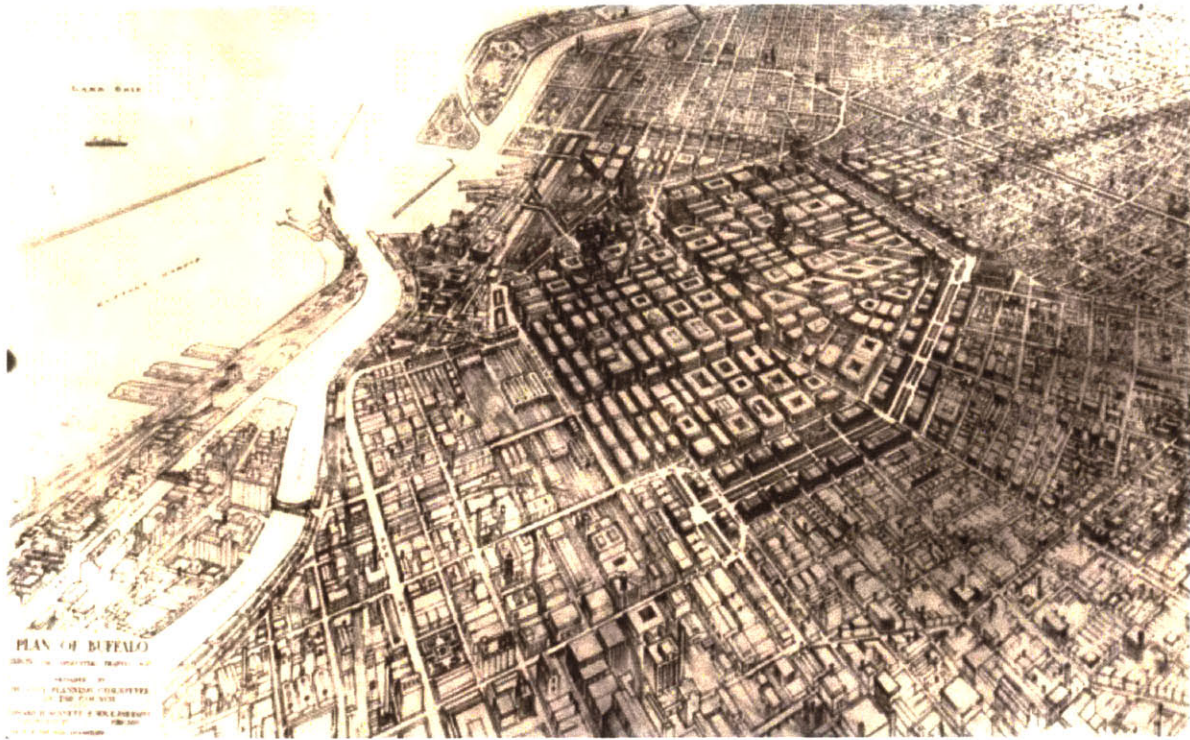
Bennett's Buffalo Plan, much like Dunn's plan for Oklahoma City, straddles two eras of city planning and thus speaks both backward and forward in time. The original commission called upon Bennett and his partners to create a plan for a civic center, but "it was realized at the outset that...that an analysis of the traffic conditions would be a necessary step toward the fixing of building sites."⁹¹ A majority of the report, composed with the engineer William Parsons, is devoted, in turn, to recommendations for "circuit" thoroughfares, street widenings and extensions, and other reconfigurations tailored to traffic. For the public building sites, Bennett's report suggests a decentralized plan, with several distinct groups oriented towards the city's unique axial plan. With reference to the plan for Chicago, alterations were suggested to the city's waterfront railways and park system, but these remain secondary to the lengthy discussion of transportation. It is the renderings of Jules Guérin, however, that give the plan its identity. Color renderings of the city demonstrate its metropolitan reach towards Niagara Falls and smaller cities of upstate New York. A dense collection of blocks of equal height and volume with chamfered corners governs a center newly encircled by a proposed circuit route that recalls Vienna's Ringstrasse. The City Hall, oriented to the vanishing point of each diagonal, towers over the landscape. Detailed renderings of the major civic buildings evince a clear Parisian influence and

88 Prepared for the Buffalo City Planning Committee with William Parsons and H.T. Frost and Cyrus W. Thomas Associates.

89 David Gordon. "The Other Author of the 1908 Plan of Chicago: Edward H. Bennett—Urban Designer, Planner and Architect: Research from the Field" *Planning Perspectives* 25.2 (2010), 231.

90 Of the plans that Bennett composed, Guerin has been identified as the delineator for Chicago, Minneapolis, and Buffalo.

91 Edward H. Bennett and William Parsons. *Buffalo: Report on the City Plan and Public Building Sites* (Buffalo, NY: Buffalo City Planning Committee. 1922), 3.



1.6, 1.7
above: Circumferential Traffic Way
bottom left: City Hall Group
Buffalo: Report on the City Plan and Public Building Sites. Edward H. Bennett and William E. Parsons. Buffalo City Planning Committee, 1922. Courtesy of the Ryerson & Burnham Archives at the Art Institute of Chicago

1.8
 Approaching the Triumphal Bridge From the South. Photographer: C.D. Arnold (c1901). Credit: C. D. Arnold. *The Pan-American Exposition Illustrated.* (Buffalo, N. Y.: C. D. Arnold, 1901), p. 47.

Bennett specifically cited Paris as his inspiration for Buffalo in the report.⁹²

Bennett's 1922 plan for Buffalo, while suggestive of developments in the comprehensive model of planning, remains an extension of the basic paradigm aspired to by the 1909 *Plan of Chicago*. The plan's rational sensitivity to concerns of traffic in the text is overshadowed by a treatment of the streets and diagonals in the Beaux Arts mode. The music hall and the multi-way boulevards evoke Parisian aspirations that were by relics of a bygone era by the 1920s, while the regional system of parks and parkways conveyed a language of civic and spatial grandeur whose latent value lay only "as a means of winning the interest and support of the citizens."⁹³

The Advent of the City Practical

George B. Ford and the Taylorized Plan

The shift from the "City Beautiful" to the "City Practical" was neither absolute nor sudden. At the same time that city planners began to work in a rational comprehensive mode, others, like Bennett, were still producing plans that harked back to Kessler's parks or Burnham's boulevards. Just before World War I, however, a shift took place that reflected a newfound awareness of the complexity of physical and social problems created by growth and mobility. While both the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* and the 1907 *City Plan for St. Louis* had foreshadowed aspects of the City Practical, both were festooned with elaborate civic visions that overshadowed their more pragmatic recommendations. At the same time, a growing alienation appeared between the branch of physical planning and the realm of civic reform in housing and sanitation. In certain ways, these had always been two separate but overlapping spheres, yet at the first National Planning Conference on City Planning in 1909, their priorities became accentuated to the point of divergence. After Benjamin C. Marsh alienated some of the conference members over his tax reform proposals, an impasse ensued. Marsh, who had organized the conference, ceded control to Olmsted, Jr. and Nolen. Shortly thereafter, the "housers" including Lawrence Veiller and Robert DeForest, founded the National Housing Association, a separation that undermined widespread interest in housing among planners for over a decade.⁹⁴

The growing division between these two groups left physical planning without a strong base in research methods and techniques.⁹⁵ An

92 Bennett, *Buffalo*, 14.

93 Ibid, 6.

94 Donald Krueckeberg. *The American Planner: Biographies and Recollections, 2nd edition* (New Brunswick 7, 1994), 128-129.

95 Scott, 116. Also see Scott, 93-95 on the Pittsburgh Survey. Housers and social reformers were pioneers in systematic mapping and data collection. Among the earliest precedents in this respect are the Hull House Maps of wages and nationalities (1895) and the Pittsburgh Survey (1907) of social and living conditions, including instances of disease.

illustration of these shortcomings was indicated by New Haven's 1910 city planning report. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and his associate, the architect Cass Gilbert, had hired a young social statistician by the name of Roland Byrnes to prepare a statistical report of New Haven in 1907. "Confronted with what they considered a vast amount of material, Olmsted and Gilbert apparently did not know how to make use of it... The designer-planners were obviously uncomfortable in the attempt to utilize statistical data. Instinctively they fell back on their own humanist motivation and aesthetic judgments..."⁹⁶

The first avid champion of the City Practical to emerge in the second decade of the twentieth century was the architect George B. Ford of New York, a friend of the civic reformer and National Conference on City Planning organizer Benjamin C. Marsh. Ford, who transcended the houser-physical planner divide and who had a brother that studied housing issues, had been highly critical of Olmsted's failure to grapple with large data sets and was "determined to make city planning a science."⁹⁷ As a practicing architect, Ford appreciated the importance and desirability of aesthetics, yet his conviction was that the "things which foster...delight in the city... [should] follow the lines laid down by the practical interests of the community."⁹⁸ In a 1913 article, Ford laid out a proposal for the basic components of a modern comprehensive plan and its implementation, which included considerations such as law, financing, and housing that were not standard among planning reports of the time.⁹⁹ Ford deemphasized the physical program by burying it within more complex ideas and data about city making and urban processes. His program also indicated a necessary interest in implementation, a significant break from earlier plans, which rely on civic boosterism that did not always materialize.

Ford's comprehensive model, however, was not only designed to bridge the planner-houser divide, but also to cater to businessmen of a no-nonsense persuasion. He embraced the scientific management methods set forth by Frederick Winslow Taylor in part because he believed that his practice would benefit from their application.¹⁰⁰ An unsigned article in *American City*, which some suspect to have been written by Ford himself, lauded his techniques. "This method of work, systematized, standardized, 'Taylorized,' as it is, has most decidedly proved its worth. It appeals

96 Scott, 119-120.

97 Ibid, 210.

98 George B. Ford, "The City Scientific," *Proceedings of the Fifth National Conference on City Planning*, 31.

99 These consisted of streets; transportation of people; transportation of goods; factories and warehouses; food-supply markets; water supply and sanitation; housing; recreation; parks, boulevards, street planting; architecture; laws; and financing or methods of paying for improvements.

100 Scott, 122

strongly to the American businessman...and convinces everyone that the experts have real knowledge on which to base their recommendations, and are not presenting mere dreams, pretty but impracticable.”¹⁰¹

Discussing the city plans of this age, M. Christine Boyer offers the following analysis:

“The diverse and opposing strategies of industrial and financial capital, small businesses and trade groups, professional concerns and middle-class outrages formed a network across which the power of capital was intricately webbed. Planning documents became the mode through which these contradictions found physical expression and idealistic resolution; they represented discourses of constraint that selected and organized material according to implicit controls. These documents privileged certain planned improvements with recognition and left others unmentioned. They linked those included with their chains of civic and economic support, yet failed to include voices in opposition... While the strategies and information presented may have contradicted each other, these planning documents presented the illusion that their proposals were a series of compatible statements. Planning documents were written at an abstracted level of discourse, never speaking of the motives and conflicts behind their production. They offered a normative resolution of what the American city ought to look like, while leaving aside the structural limitations and practical barriers... they seldom outlined the dispute between traffic plans and architectural embellishments, between streetcar franchise holders and those who advocated cheap methods of decentralizing congested urban redevelopment... At issue was not whether the city was too exploitative or too unhealthful but rather its physical order as an effective instrument in the service of capital productivity.”¹⁰²

Boyer’s critique of the planning document as both a neutral and contradictory abstraction that prioritized physical order over structural limitations provides a salient critique of plans from the City Practical period through urban renewal. The rise of a technocratic attitude towards city planning and the dissolution or de-emphasis of its aesthetic disposition marked an important turning point in the history of planning, if not the history of plans themselves. “Ford was so intent on creating respect for the planning process,” writes Scott, “that he was in danger of losing sight of the importance of plumbing the desires, feelings, hopes, and aspirations of community and neighborhood...”¹⁰³ Nonetheless, many planners whose previous work had prioritized those aesthetic aspects of the plan, including Olmsted Jr., Nolen, and even the now-aged Kessler, eventually shifted in the direction of Ford’s Taylorized, technocratic approach to the plan. Beginning with New York in 1916, zoning accelerated this shift, which

101 “Efficiency in City Planning,” *American City*, VIII (February, 1913), 139.

102 Boyer, 67-68.

103 Scott, 122.

gained further traction with the passage of the Standard State Enabling Act issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1922 and the Standard City Enabling Act issued in 1928.

Achieving a Comprehensive Plan

Working as the “Technical Advisory Corporation,” Ford and his partner, the engineer E.P. Goodrich, played a critical role in the city planning movement during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Yet their accomplishments would be far overshadowed by a young assistant whom they had hired to supervise their work for the Newark City Planning Commission in 1912, Harland Bartholomew. After the city elected not to renew the contracts of Ford and Goodrich beyond 1914, Bartholomew was hired as the nation’s first full time professional city planner in a public agency. He “helped devise Ford’s methodology, improved upon it in 1914 and 1915 when he was working entirely on his own, and in the long run spent a lifetime refining the techniques of city planning and the concept of the overall plan.”¹⁰⁴ Bartholomew, and another second former employee of Ford and Goodrich, the Yugoslavia-born planner Ladislav Segoe, would together best define the attitudes of the City Practical planner, drafting comprehensive plans, street plans, and transportation plans for cities across the United States from the 1920s through the 1950s.

Harland Bartholomew, like many early planners, had trained as a civil engineer. His background, however, was part of a constellation of professional disciplines that characterized early city planning. The founding members of the American City Planning Institute in 1917 included Bartholomew; Edward Bassett and Alfred Bettman, both lawyers; the engineer Robert Whitten; developer J.C. Nichols; and Ford, Goodrich, Kessler, Nolen, and Olmsted Jr., all architects and landscape architects. The many branches and expertise present in the profession at its inception reflected its diversity of impulses and ideas, along with its at times contradictory objectives, as Boyer acknowledged. As early as 1909, Olmsted Jr. had commissioned a lawyer by the name of Flavel Shurtleff to survey municipalities on the legal impediments to planning, work that was eventually published in his book, *Carrying Out the City Plan* (1914).¹⁰⁵ Olmsted’s concern with implementation and the legal obstacles to planning reflected not just an evolution and maturation of his own thinking, but a decisive rhetorical shift. Indeed, while planning documents continued to include illustrative maps, site plans, and renderings, these elements became vestigial elements of civic beautification movement rather than careful

104 Scott, 123.

105 Ibid, 133.

exercises in urban design.¹⁰⁶ While they still demonstrated a high degree of integration between architecture, landscape planning, and transportation that was a hallmark of early city plans, by the early 1920s, these documents had become conscious of their own instrumentality within the law.

Zoning before Planning

Beginning in the 1920s, planning began to be eclipsed by zoning as a critical instrument for controlling chaotic and unpredictable growth and land uses in cities. The emergence of zoning began in earnest with the 1916 New York City Zoning Resolution. The New York resolution regulated the height and bulk of buildings, creating the city's famous "wedding cake" building typology and was based upon a careful study of zoning practices used in Germany beginning in the late 1800s. The rise of zoning over planning had been accelerated by concerned commercial and business interests that sought control over the types of establishments, people, and uses popping up in their districts. In zoning, well-to-do business districts like Fifth Avenue found a palliative to the encroaching garment industries (and their immigrant workers). Zoning allowed them to impose a legal order that neither social scientific analyses nor soft-hued Beaux Arts perspectives could provide.

"Nothing appeared so destructive of urban order as garages and machine shops in residential areas, or loft building in exclusive shopping districts, or breweries amid small stores and light manufacturing establishments. Nothing caused an investor so much anguish as the sight of a grocery store being erected next door to a single-family residence on which he had lent money. Nothing made whole neighborhoods feel so outraged and helpless as the construction of apartment houses when the private deed restrictions expired and there was no zoning to prevent vacant lots from being used for multifamily structures. Zoning was the heaven-sent nostrum for sick cities, the wonder drug of planners, the balm sought by lending institutions and householders alike. City after city worked itself into a state of acute apprehension until it could adopt zoning ordinance."¹⁰⁷

The precedent set by the New York ordinance, enshrined and accelerated by the Standard State Enabling Act of 1922 and the legal sanction of zoning's constitutionality in the 1926 Supreme Court case *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty*, "contributed to the widespread practice of zoning before planning."¹⁰⁸

Planners were both conscious of and attempted to redress this

106 Some, such as Edward Bennett, would spend their whole careers practicing in the City Beautiful mode, while others, such as Nolen, gradually shifted towards the City Practical.

107 Scott, 192.

108 Ibid, 160.

shift. The landmark Ford-Goodrich Plan for Cincinnati (1925), written by Ladislav Segoe with the counsel of the lawyer Alfred Bettman, even sought to attain “the force of law,” requiring that departures from the official plan be submitted to the planning commission and approved by a two-thirds vote. The specifics of the state statute on which this claim was based, however, suggested that the planning commission have influence over the plan, but not veto power over the decisions of individual property owners.¹⁰⁹

In 1927, looking back at the previous twenty years of city planning, John Nolen expressed with some regret that while 176 cities had prepared comprehensive plans (many by himself) during that period, 525 cities had adopted zoning ordinances.¹¹⁰ “With the possible exception of Chicago,” said Nolen, “no large town or city in the United States has yet taken city planning very seriously.”¹¹¹ In many cities where Nolen and others worked elected officials and commercial interests clashed, undermining progress. Some “maintained a fundamental skepticism about whether consultants like Nolen were marketing a legitimate civic vision and had the city’s interests in mind or whether they were more akin to hucksters and snake oil salesmen,” suggests Isenberg.¹¹² Few cities had professional planning staffs and most relied on engineering and public works departments to carry out those functions.¹¹³

In spite of its critics and shortcomings, city planning had by the 1920s nevertheless expanded its scope considerably and undergone a rigorous shift from the aesthetic domain of the City Beautiful to the scientific rigor of long-range planning and regulation. In 1924, George B. Ford remarked proudly that “city engineers report that zoning is saving the city money in the design of sewers, paving, grading, and other public works, as it is now possible to calculate the kind and intensity of future growth without having to make a large allowance for contingencies.”¹¹⁴ In 1927, seeking to renew emphasis on the master plan over the zoning ordinance,¹¹⁵ the Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover issued the Standard City Planning Enabling Act. In spite of its good intentions, the act was marred by multiple problems that hampered master planning following its passage. Following the advice of Edward Bassett, the act

109 Scott, 231.

110 John Nolen. *Planning Problems of Town, City, and Region: Papers and Discussions at the National Conference on City Planning. Vol. 19* (William F. Fell Company, 1927), 20.

111 John Nolen, “Planning Problems of Industrial Cities—Niagara Falls as an Illustration,” *Proceedings of the Eleventh National Conference on City Planning*, 30-31.

112 Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 49.

113 Scott, 228.

114 George B. Ford, “What planning has done for cities,” *Proceedings of Sixteenth National Conference on City Planning*, 18-19.

115 Scott, 242.

specifically referenced only five classifications for the contents of a master plan: “streets, other types of public grounds, public buildings, utilities, and zoning.”¹¹⁶ This limited view, which was expanded upon by a footnote calling for a more inclusive definition of the master plan, caused cities to produce “lopsided plans omitting some of the essential community facilities...and utilities.”¹¹⁷ The act also contained a provision that could be interpreted as endorsing the practice of producing individual aspects of the plan separately. This reinforced a tendency to produce separate plans for parks, transportation, and other elements, rather than as “an organic whole, every part of which, whether considered territorially or as to subject matter, is organically interrelated with every other part.”¹¹⁸ The act also contained a provision for the mandatory referral of zoning changes and other public improvements to the zoning commission. M.G. Scott points out that “had the standard act provided that the city council...also adopt the long-term plan, by resolution, and take an active interest in it as an expression of public policy, the shift from a certain preoccupation of planning commissions with the distant future to a close collaboration with the council in effecting desirable change might have been hastened.”¹¹⁹

Another arena in which city planning had been lacking was that of housing. Whereas business and commercial interests had a stake in the physical improvement of roads, utilities, infrastructure, buildings, the housing of indigent and low-income groups rarely found interest or expression in city plans.¹²⁰ Although concerns over the worsening conditions of slums and housing for the impoverished had (in part) seeded the development of city planning, the direction of the profession had veered elsewhere and witnessed a persistent schism between progressive housers and physical planners. While a number of plans included mention of housing, such as Harland Bartholomew’s *Plan for Wichita* (1923) and surveys of Detroit conducted in 1927,¹²¹ the issue of housing remained beyond the traditional scope of city planning services in the 1920s.¹²²

The shift of the profession towards the City Practical and comprehensive planning may be observed in the expression of two plans from the period: Fresno’s *Progress of a City Plan for Fresno* by Charles H. Cheney (1918) and *The City Plan for Oklahoma City* (1930) by Hare & Hare.

116 Scott, 243.

117 Ibid, 244.

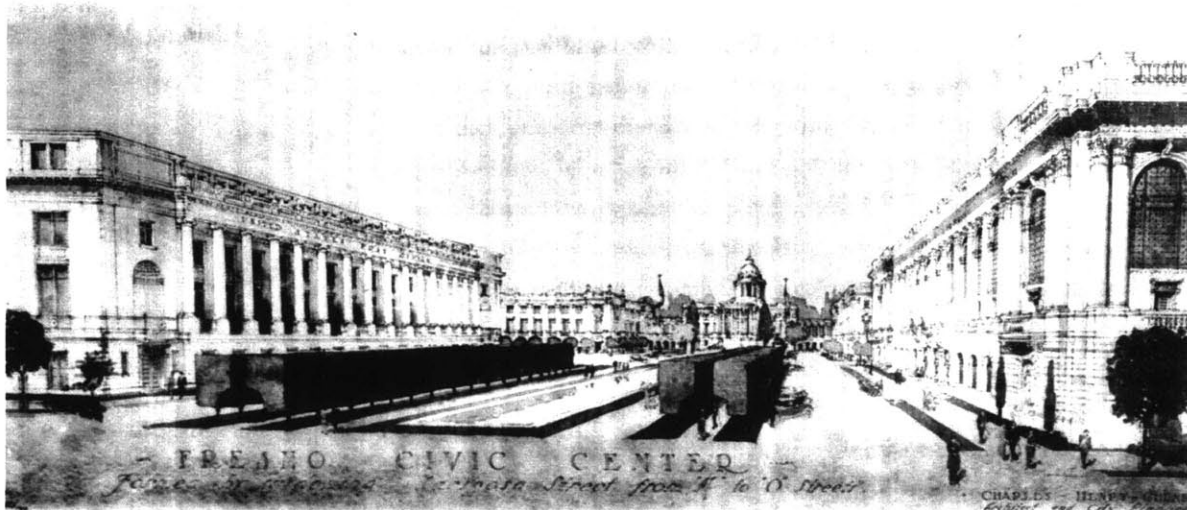
118 U.S. Department of Commerce, Advisory Committee on City Planning and Zoning. *A Standard City Planning Enabling Act* (Washington, 1928), 17 n. 42.

119 Scott, 245.

120 Ibid, 255-256.

121 Ibid, 256.

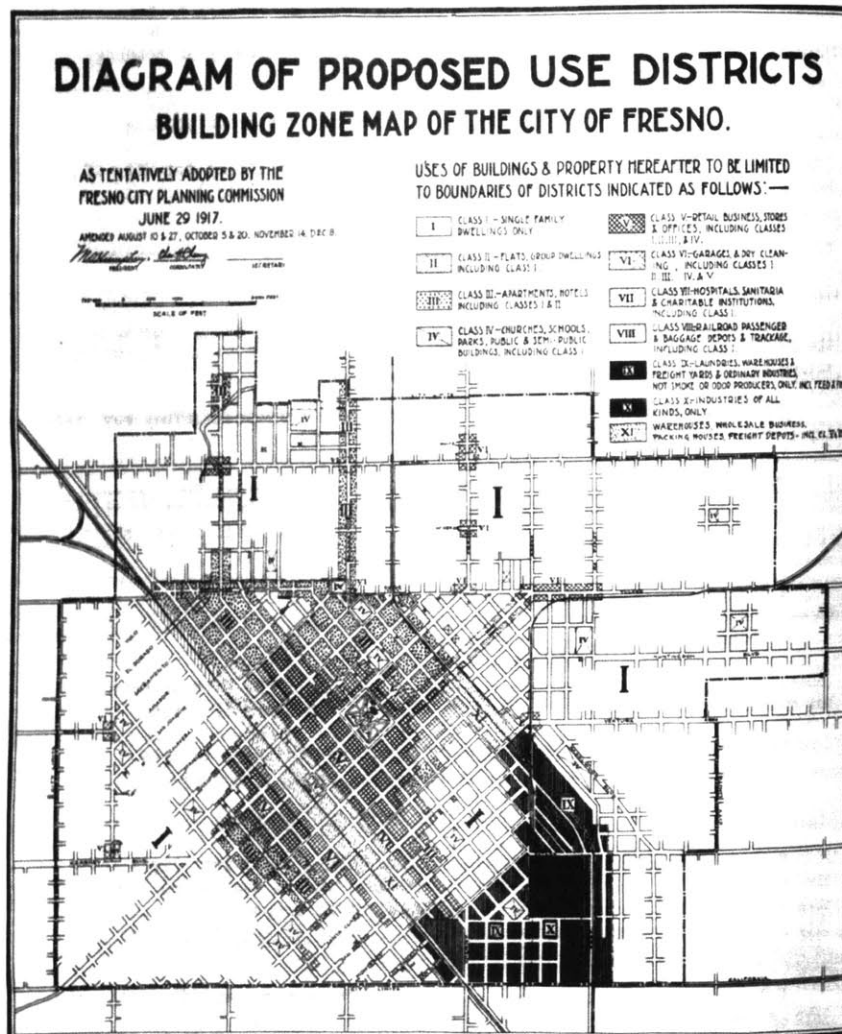
122 See Scott, 256. The National Housing Association held only three conferences in the 1920s and despite the pleas of reformers like Lawrence Veiller, housing concerns did not gain significant traction among planners until the onset of the Depression.



1.9, 1.10

above: Fresno Civic Center
 right: Diagram of Proposed Use Districts.

Progress on a City Plan for Fresno.
 Charles H. Cheney. Fresno City
 Planning Commission, 1918.
 Reprinted by the Fresno-Clovis
 Area Planning Commission, 1957.
 Courtesy of MIT Libraries



Charles Cheney's Plan for Fresno, 1918

Cheney's 1918 *Progress of a City Plan for Fresno* followed closely upon work he had completed for other California cities, including, notably, an early zoning ordinance proposed for the city of Berkeley. Cheney's Fresno plan was his first major commission and received considerable praise at the time for its progressive views on zoning, as well as its handsome civic center arrangement. As compared to earlier plans, the Cheney plan for Fresno may be understood as a direct reflection of the profession's increasingly comprehensive approach.

The plan lays out a framework for growth and change over a 25-year period. Having been published in the immediate aftermath of World War I, it began with a discussion of wartime planning efforts, followed by a lengthy discussion of the benefits of railroad consolidation. The plan contains a chapter on streets and highways, as well as a section on zoning that proposed eleven new zoning classes. Some of these classes would be familiar today, while others, such as garages and dry cleaning, would fall under "use" categories. Cheney heralded the arrival of zoning with considerable enthusiasm. "The establishment of a zone ordinance," he states, "will do for individual owners what they cannot now do for themselves – set up uniform restrictions that will protect each against his neighbor and thus be a benefit to all."¹²³ Cheney supported his case for zoning with auspicious photographs of junkyards and laundry in "good residence districts," a hallmark of city plans in that period.

Other elements of the plan echoed the tenets of the parks system and City Beautiful eras. The plan advocated for the development of a parks and boulevards system that, like Dunn's Oklahoma City speedway, had a boulevard encircling the entirety of the city. In contrast to the Dunn plan, however, Cheney provided statistics on existing playgrounds for children, as well as the necessary additional acreage proposed for their expansion. He called for the creation of playgrounds so that children would have a safe place to play beyond the dangers of the street.¹²⁴ In contrast to the earlier Dunn Plan, Cheney took account of the cost and maintenance burden of his improvements, in particular for the parks, for which he provided both a specific accounting and a brief essay on their potential to increase surrounding real estate values, indicating that his plan was meant to be read by businessmen who might otherwise be skeptical of investing in landscape improvements.¹²⁵ The plan's civic center proposal, meanwhile, remained firmly entrenched in the Beaux Arts tradition, even going so far

123 Charles H. Cheney. *Progress of a City Plan for Fresno* (Fresno, CA: Fresno City Planning Commission, 1918. Reprint by the Fresno-Clovis Area Planning Commission, 1957), 30.

124 Cheney, 52.

125 Ibid, 60-61.

as to include photos of the Rue de Rivoli in Paris and Castle Square in Karlsruhe, Germany.

The City Plan for Oklahoma City, Hare & Hare, 1930 Between 1918, when Cheney's Fresno plan was published, and 1930, when Hare & Hare submitted *The City Plan for Oklahoma City* to the local planning commission, planning underwent a decisive shift from the City Beautiful to the City Practical. Hare & Hare's plan, which built upon a foundation of work left incomplete by the death of George Kessler in 1923,¹²⁶ reserved its large plate drawings for statistical surveys more derivative of the 1907 Pittsburgh Survey than of the 1909 Chicago Plan. The plan's civic center proposal expressed a passing indifference to convention. "Civic Centers have been recommended in connection with most city plans and the impression may be gained in some cases that this feature of the plan was included simply to conform with the usual custom," the plan read. "In Oklahoma City there can be no question but that a Civic Center is a desirable and necessary phase of civic development."¹²⁷ In spite of the positive statement, the renderings of the civic center itself appeared almost as a footnote in the report. The center was illustrated using a few small, rough sketches that dispensed with the Beaux Arts' prescription of uniform cornice lines and Parisian motifs in favor of buildings of uneven proportion and variable heights.¹²⁸ The design of the main civic monument borrowed directly from a World War I monument in Indianapolis. A proposal for a park near the civic center was more suggestive of an avenue in New York City or Downtown Kansas City than Paris, with staid Art Deco apartment buildings lining the boulevard.¹²⁹

While playing down the physical renderings of the proposal, Hare & Hare produced a diversity of maps dealing with zoning and circulation. Several large plate maps indicated present land uses and proposed zoning, along with streets to be widened, areas of the city to be annexed, streetcars and bus routes. The plan included a copy of both the existing and proposed zoning ordinance, corresponding maps, as well as a section on procedure, including sub-sections on financing, legislation, and "urgent projects."¹³⁰

As landscape architects building upon the legacy of George Kessler, Hare & Hare's plans retained a lengthy description of parks, allusions

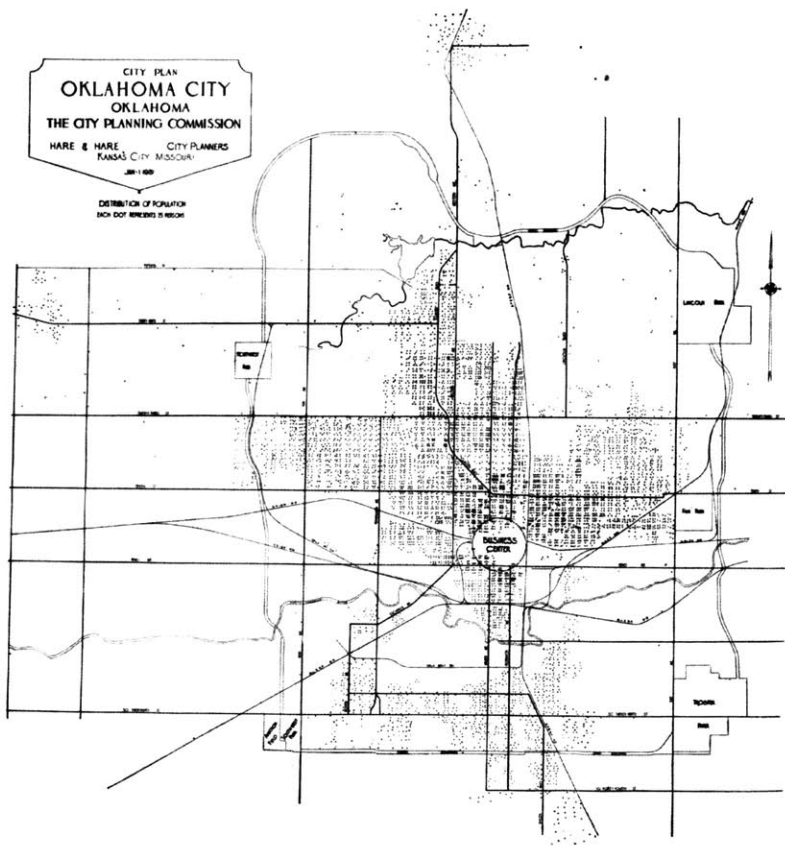
126 George Kessler had commenced work on the plan in 1920, but died in the midst of its preparation and was never able to issue a final report. Hare & Hare took up many of his unfinished commissions and clients in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

127 Hare & Hare. *The City Plan for Oklahoma City*. (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma City Planning Commission, 1930), 47.

128 Hare & Hare, 47.

129 *Ibid*, 49.

130 *Ibid*, 58.



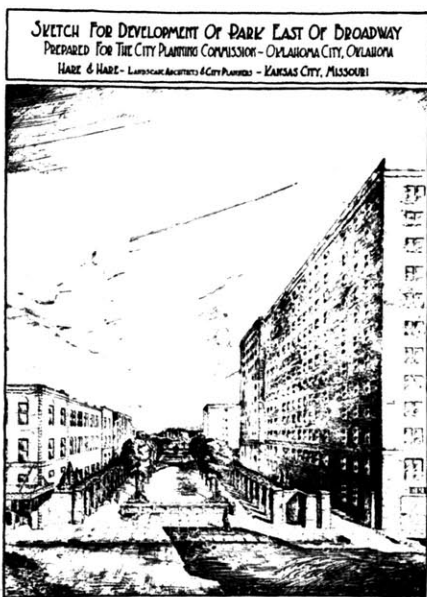
1.11, 1.12, 1.13

Left: Distribution of population

Bottom Left: Sketch for Development of Park east of Broadway

Bottom Right: Sketch for Civic Center Park

The City Plan for Oklahoma City.
Hare & Hare, City Planning
Consultants, Kansas City,
Missouri. Oklahoma City City
Planning Commission, 1931.
Courtesy of MIT Libraries



to the partially implemented Dunn plan, and future proposals for open space. Nonetheless, the plan operated in the comprehensive tradition then emerging, with a distinctly regional outlook, a Taylorized approach, and a diminished view of the Beaux Arts tradition. The plan, in fact, is modeled to a large degree after those of Harland Bartholomew, whose practice had by then emerged as the foremost office in comprehensive planning and would have set the standard for the era.¹³¹

Planning in Transition: The Depression and War World II

Following the bevy of comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances produced in the 1920s, the onset of the Depression in 1929 forced the planning profession to reassess its relationship to capital. The optimism of Herbert Hoover, whose technocratic regime had enabled comprehensive programs for land use reform and transportation policy, had withered under the depraved conditions of urban poverty and the onset of war. The “perspicacious Charles A. Beard¹³² discerned that in a pluralistic society, with its real estate interests, public utility interests, various manufacturing interests, commercial interests, shipping and carrying interests, banking interests, and organized labor interest, and office-holding and many lesser interests, the city planners actually were redistributing, or helping to redistribute, wealth from some groups to other groups...If this planning were to confer genuine social benefits, it would have to be allied to policies consciously devised to effect desirable shifts in the distribution of wealth.”¹³³

The Depression awakened the cry of reformers to more closely align federal policy with planning objectives, rather than leave the responsibility for housing the poor to private enterprise. In the late 1920s, housing reform finally began to gain momentum and take physical shape, most significantly as expressed in Clarence Perry’s 1929 “The Neighborhood Unit” published as a chapter in *The Regional Plan of New York and its Environs* (1929) and in the town of Radburn, N.J., designed by Henry Wright and Clarence Stein. Both offered a concrete template from which new suburban communities and inner city slum clearance projects could begin to derive their logic, though it was a model that would only be tenuously adhered to in the nation’s first housing

131 An interim plan worth looking at for a view of planning progress between Cheney and Hare & Hare is Harland Bartholomew’s 1923 *A Comprehensive City Plan for Wichita*. The plan includes many of the Beaux Arts renderings and other elements present in earlier plans, yet also contains the systematic, data-driven approaches that would become standard by 1931.

132 Charles A. Beard was a well-known American historian in the first half of the twentieth century who gained prominence in reevaluating the history of the founding fathers as motivated by economic rather than philosophical motives.

133 Scott, *American City Planning*, 269.

clearance and relief efforts during the New Deal.

A survey of plans from the 1930s and 1940s reveals the overlapping impulses, practices and procedures of planning from the 1920s to the 1950s. Following the initial flurry of comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances in the 1920s, the following two decades saw the development of far fewer plans, but significant progress in other arenas, including regional planning (such as the Tennessee Valley Authority) and early federal housing production for the destitute. Many of the plans published during the early 1930s had been largely completed before the Depression, while others were aligned directly with wartime efforts and recovery. Bomber towns such as Willow Run outside of Detroit, MI and Linda Vista near San Diego, CA offered planners and designers an opportunity to experiment with new ideas in town planning and design emanating from Europe, as well as novel construction methods and materials.¹³⁴ Many of these, such as that for Willow Run, were also significant and influential as proposals on paper. Eero Saarinen's proposal for Willow Run, for instance, included five neighborhood units and a modern town center that presaged the development of shopping center concepts that would emerge after the war.¹³⁵

CIAM and the Rise of Modernist Discourse

Just as significant during this transitional period was the development of compelling models of a future postwar American society. The dying enthusiasm for the Beaux Arts civic center in Hare & Hare's plan for Oklahoma City reflected of a growing distaste among both planners and architects with cities increasingly viewed as incompatible and unprepared for the changes on the horizon. Whereas early twentieth century city planners sought to counteract the negative externalities of industrialization through the design of therapeutic landscapes and grand civic complexes, those of the 1930s and 1940s increasingly departed from convention and embraced the potential of technology and mobility as a form-giving principle for the cities of tomorrow. This is what Marshall Berman refers to as the third phase of modernism.¹³⁶

The shift away from the City Beautiful in American city planning reflected a dissatisfaction with the old order best expressed in the emerging discourse of modernism of Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Modern (CIAM) in Europe, which hosted its first conference in La Sarraz,

134 See Scott, *American City Planning*, 396 and David J. Smiley, *Pedestrian Modern: Shopping and American Architecture, 1925-1956* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 143-144.

135 Scott, *American City Planning*, 396 and Smiley, *Pedestrian Modern*, 145.

136 Berman, 290. Berman also refers to this as "the expressway world."

Switzerland in 1928. CIAM emerged as an organized counterpoint to the entrenched École des Beaux-Arts tradition in Paris, and its parallels elsewhere in Europe. Its formation marked “an elite new structure of association for architects to advance their cause against the then-dominant neoclassicism of the academies of architecture” and “a defining moment in the formation of a new approach to architecture.”¹³⁷ Like George B. Ford, Le Corbusier, CIAM’s chief spokesmen and one of its founding members, “maintained that he was an apolitical technocrat seeking only to apply the lessons of Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henry Ford to the production of housing and cities.”¹³⁸ Embedded within the modernist agenda and reflected in its spare and functional aesthetic, was “a highly charged vocabulary expressive both of the collective working power of the proletariat and of a break with the classical system of architecture.”¹³⁹ Corbusier’s widely publicized Ville Radieuse (1924) and Plan Voisin (1925) sought for nothing less than to undermine the order of an entrenched elite hostile to modern art and architecture and to advance a counter model to the prevailing Garden City new town ideals proposed by Raymond Unwin and others.¹⁴⁰

The tenets of CIAM would be closely studied and loosely applied by housing reformers and American architects whose agenda and beliefs resonated with those of CIAM. The exodus of some of CIAM’s primary adherents and leaders, including Walter Gropius and Mies Van Der Rohe, to America during the rise of Nazi Germany, further fueled the rise of modern architecture in the United States. As the modern architecture of CIAM emerged, so too did a streamlined modernism less bound to the ideological tenets of the architectural avant-garde. In the early 1940s, this stylized version of modernism gradually replaced Art Deco, which had itself superseded the Moorish and Spanish motifs that had been popular in the early 1920s, to become the dominant form of commercial modern architecture. It expressed itself in everything from movie palaces to drive-ins to storefronts, and eventually evolved into the festive language of modernization employed by Morris Lapidus and Victor Gruen, among others.

General Motors’ *Futurama* exhibition, designed by the industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes for the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City, marked a watershed in the arrival of popular modernism. In breaking with the Beaux Arts aesthetic in the forum of the fair, it heralded, as had the

137 Eric Paul Mumford. *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 1.

138 Mumford, 20.

139 Ibid, 21.

140 Ibid, 19.

Columbian Exposition, the arrival of a new age. With its daunting vision of glass-paneled skyscrapers and submerged freeways, *Futurama* adapted the utopian tradition of Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* (1924) and Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (1932), as well as modernist luminaries Ludwig Hilberseimer and Richard Neutra, to create a dizzying showcase of the modern world to come for a popular audience. It synthesized and reflected critical tenets in planning that would emerge in the post-war era, including the ideal of complete separation between motorists and pedestrians, the segregation of neighborhoods into distinct units defined by expressways, and the wholesale embrace of a vertical metropolis.

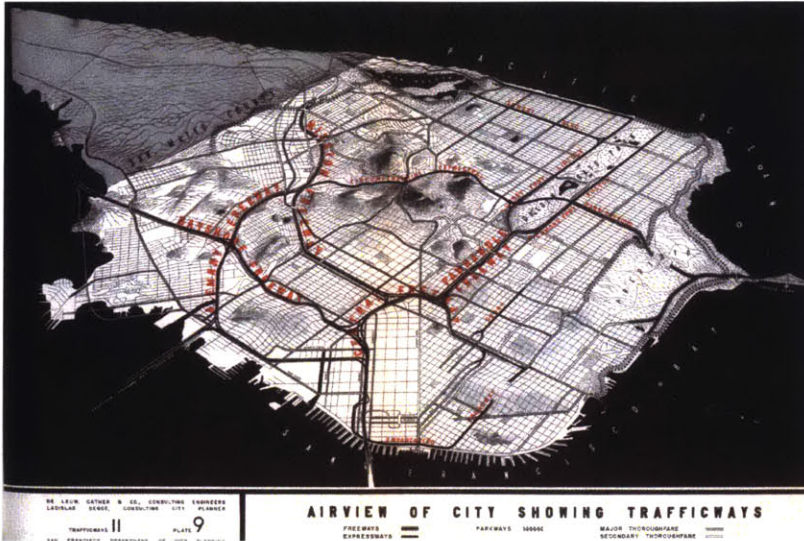
Planning for Postwar America: Harland Bartholomew, Ladislav Segoe, and the Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive planning re-emerged with force beginning in the mid-1940s, as city planning commissions around the country sought to project and define their circumstances in the post-war era.¹⁴¹ The themes of postwar planning, however, tended to emphasize economic prospects (often in the form of parking studies signaling an early preoccupation with downtown decline) and housing conditions rather than the parks, playgrounds, and street widenings popular in the 1920s. "The tenor of planning," suggests Scott, "reflected the anxiety of the business community, and from the mayor's office to the city engineering department and the city planning commission the urgency attached to preparing a backlog of public works as a means of providing jobs evidenced the prevalent feeling that mobilization for postwar economic resurgence was second in importance only to winning the war itself."¹⁴²

The 1940s-era work of the rival planners Harland Bartholomew and Ladislav Segoe reflected the prevalent ideas of the age. The civic parkways and monuments that remained a hallmark of plans through the 1930s by the mid-1940s had been usurped by a profusion of growth charts, land use maps, and population projections. As integral to the 1940s era plan as the neighborhood unit was the grid of highways that separated them, including detailed maps of complex interchange geometries, as well as parking and access provisions that dwarfed anticipated volumes from a decade earlier. Bartholomew's plans for Dallas, for instance, contained fifteen reports published over three years, including sections on streets, zoning, and population growth. His plans from the period also charted

¹⁴¹ Eldridge Lovelace. *Harland Bartholomew: His Contributions to American Urban Planning*. (Chicago: Illinois Department of Urban and Regional Planning, 1993), A-20. Bartholomew's practice, which had produced few plans in the 1930s, began to receive more commissions in 1940, with a significant body of work coming in to the practice in 1944-1945.

¹⁴² Scott, 398.



1.14
Airview of city showing trafficways.
Trafficways (11 Plate 9). *Report to
the City Planning Commission on a
transportation plan for San Francisco.*

De Leuw, Cather & Company. Ladislav
Segoe & Associates. San Francisco
Department of City Planning, 1948.
Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map
Collection

the process of decentralization driven by Federal Housing Administration policies that incentivized sprawl, favoring compact planned development as an alternative.¹⁴³

Segoe, a Jewish Hungarian émigré who had, like Bartholomew, started with the Technical Advisory Corporation in the 1920s, built a planning practice in the 1930s and 1940s that emphasized regional growth limits and planning for urban service areas¹⁴⁴ in contradistinction to his rival, who was more concerned with documentation of existing and future land uses.¹⁴⁵ Both Segoe and Bartholomew operated their offices using what has been called “personnel colonization.”¹⁴⁶ A planner would be assigned to live in a city for a contract period that was typically around three years. While there, they would work in-house at the city and would in some cases go on to become that city’s lead planner following the end of the contract. This strategy had the dual benefit of creating a strong client-consultant relationship and, in the early years of city planning, of establishing a beachhead for the creation of a municipal planning department. Using this model, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Segoe completed master plans for Cincinnati and Detroit as well as transportation plans for Buffalo, Rochester, and San Francisco with De Leuw Cather, a leading transportation engineering firm at the time. Segoe’s Detroit Plan was segmented into eight sections delivered between 1945 and 1951. These included an Expressway and Transit System Plan (1945); a Plan for the

143 Scott, 402.

144 See David J. Edelman and David J. Allor. “Ladislav Segoe and the Emergence of the Professional Planning Consultant.” *Journal of Planning History* 2.1 (2003), 58. Segoe’s urban service area concept was a derivation of George Kessler’s idea of “unitary urban surface drainage.”

145 Edelman et al., 59.

146 Krueckeberg, *The American Planner*, 223-224.

Development of the Riverfront (1945); a Recreational Facilities Plan (1946); a Trafficways Plan; a Land Use Plan (1947); a Cultural Center Plan (1948); and a Transportation Plan (1949). In the 1960s, when the foundational planning methods he had worked to establish were being questioned and overturned, Segoe stood by his approach. As David Edelman states:

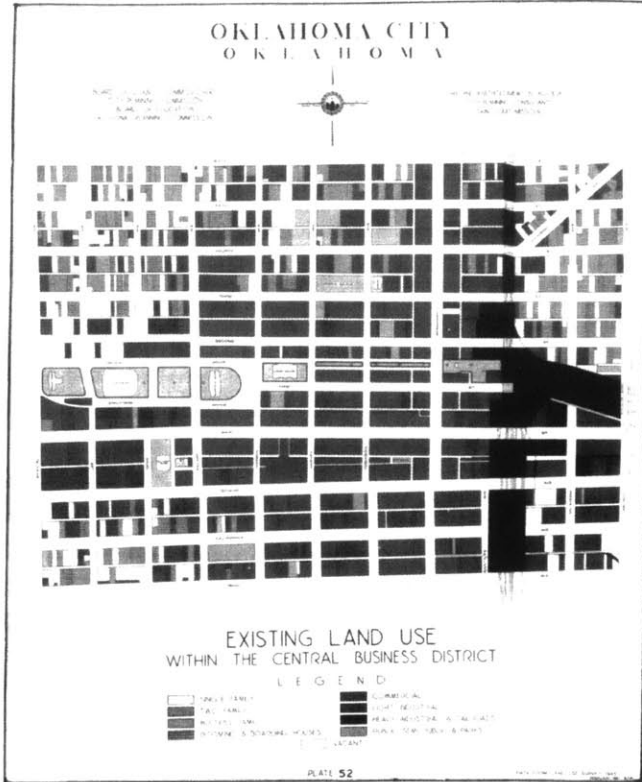
“Segoe was equally uncomfortable with social planners and with specialized planning administrators...All that he had worked to promote and to exemplify seemed to be passing away. The comprehensive and long-range process, based on and justified by a common set of goals, and implemented by a disciplined and independent cadre of professional planners, failed to win the necessary political acceptance by the community. Indeed, the community, that organic unit, the social and economic whole, which had served so long as the basis for Segoe’s work, now seemed to be destroying itself.”¹⁴⁷

Segoe, who had worked with and been mentored by the lawyer Alfred Bettman of Chicago, saw “the making of the plan” as “a professional act, not a social one.” He believed that part of the planner’s occupation was “to justify the plan to the community, so that in winning their consensus, citizen participation could be easily directed toward nonpartisan political support for the legislative adoption of the plan as a postplanning exercise.”¹⁴⁸ Segoe’s 1948 Transportation Plan for San Francisco, made with De Leuw Cather & Company Engineers, remains a symbol of the excesses of transportation planning in the freeway era, and a symbol of the failure of planning to appreciate the fabric of communities in the context of change and modernization. But Segoe’s name is rarely mentioned in the criticism of that report, for he had been long forgotten by the time it resurfaced.

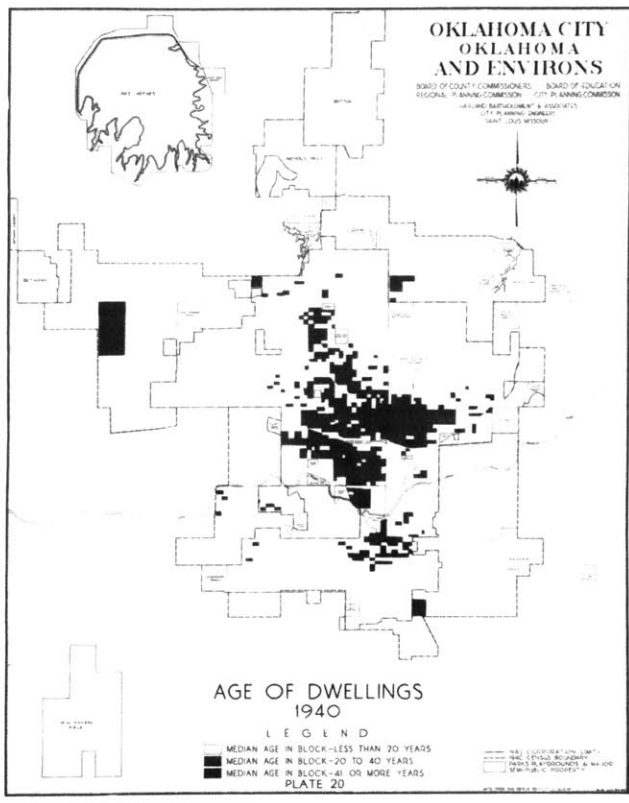
The Comprehensive City Plan, Oklahoma City, Harland Bartholomew Associates, 1949

Harland Bartholomew’s 1949 *Comprehensive City Plan* for Oklahoma City is reflective of the last generation of plans preceding the urban renewal era. Though Bartholomew’s practice had thrived in the height of the comprehensive planning era of the 1920s, the firm had produced fewer comprehensive plans from the dawn of the Depression through the onset of World War II. Progress on the Oklahoma City plan began toward the end of the war in 1944 and finished in 1947, with its adoption following a restructuring of the Planning Commission in 1949. Bartholomew’s plan, like many in the 1940s and early 1950s, responded

147 Edelman et al., 70.
148 Ibid, 69.



1.15, 1.16
 top: Existing Land Use within the Central Business District.
 bottom: Map showing Age of Dwellings, 1940
The Comprehensive City Plan, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Harland Bartholomew & Associates. Oklahoma City City Planning Commission, 1949.
 Courtesy of MIT Libraries



to the imperative of postwar growth and charted a course for the city over the next 25 years. In comparison to older plans, including Bartholomew's own work, the Oklahoma City plan is much longer, with more detailed maps on housing conditions, density, public schools, parks, and other infrastructure. The plan's content, as foreshadowed in the work of Hare & Hare, is extremely data intensive. In fact, data tables and maps make up the bulk of the report, which was delivered in an expedient spiral bound booklet, rather than a lavish printed folio. The plan exhibits the location and type of parking facilities, catchment areas for public schools, parks, and playgrounds, major county highways, and proposals for the regional airports. The civic center's expansion makes up a relatively small portion of the report, with no explicit architectural expression.

While the Oklahoma City plan is foremost a plan for growth grounded in extensive data collection, projection exercises, and infrastructural needs assessments, the departure from the city's physical plan or any architectural expression whatsoever is striking. Instead, the plan foreshadows the concerns of the urban renewal era and in particular, the need to address the conditions of slums. In the introduction to the chapter on housing program and policy, the plan states:

“There are two alternatives for future housing development in Oklahoma City. The first would be a continuation of past practices, a continuation of depreciation of the older residential areas, or the construction of additional new neighborhoods on the outskirts, or the building of more ‘shanty towns’ in the low property along the river. It might be contended that the older residential areas adjacent to the business district are so badly organized, so haphazard and heterogeneous in development, so tied by present economic and physical conditions, that their character can never be successfully improved and that therefore, they should be gradually abandoned in favor of new neighborhoods.”¹⁴⁹

Though adopted in the same year as the Housing of Act of 1949, Bartholomew's plan argued that housing improvement was a thoroughly local responsibility and disavowed the need for federal participation in the process of upgrading dwellings. He professed that the amelioration of housing standards could be “accomplished by free enterprise democratically guided and directed”¹⁵⁰ and that “there is no reason why it is necessary for a governmental agency to build houses in order to correct these conditions.”

149 Harland Bartholomew & Associates. *The Comprehensive City Plan, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma City, City Planning Commission. 1949), 36.

150 Bartholomew, *Oklahoma City*, 37-38.

The Federal Stake in Urban America

The late 1940s and early 1950s were marked by several important shifts in the cultural and political life of American cities. After the persistent efforts of planners and reformers dating back to the 1930s, President Truman finally signed into law the Housing Act of 1949. The bill authorized 810,000 new units of public housing over a six-year period and required that redevelopment projects “conform to a general plan for the redevelopment of the locality as a whole.”¹⁵¹ G. Holmes Perkins, editor of *The Journal of the American Institute of Planners* at the time, wrote that “even the plans of the most advanced cities were ‘puny in scope beside the breadth of the federal aids authorized.’”¹⁵² The implication of the advent of federal aid to cities, first in the 1949 Act and then in the 1954 Housing Act, which revised and enhanced its predecessor, was to open vast amounts of federal money for the redevelopment of American cities.

Yet these opportunities for urban redevelopment came in the context of a rapidly decentralizing metropolis. The results of the 1950 census had demonstrated that half of the growth of metropolitan areas had gone to the suburban rings around the central city.¹⁵³ Between 1950 and 1956, suburbs around the United States grew by 28 percent, with a total population gain of 10 million, while central cities grew by only two percent.¹⁵⁴ The implications of this change were accentuated further upon the passage of the 1956 Interstate Highway Act. The highway legislation, which had been heavily supported and sponsored by downtown business interests and politicians, dwarfed the urban renewal acts, both in terms of funding as well as displacement. Described by journalist Grady Clay as a “monstrous dragon let loose on the American landscape,”¹⁵⁵ the act was unleashed without a strong professional planning apparatus to manage it nor an urban land use policy to determine or drive its impact. The result was that highway engineers often maintained a planning function without having any sufficient understanding of the issues and potential ramifications of the program itself. The new roads provided easy access in and, crucially, *out* of the core, and comprehensively altered the logic of urban development from radial streetcar suburbs governed by transit lines to the open grid of highways and arterials. Most importantly, the new highways would challenge the primacy of downtown as the dominant shopping market for regional consumers and shift the center of gravity towards the burgeoning suburbs, where it remains to this day.

151 Scott, 464.

152 Ibid, Ibid.

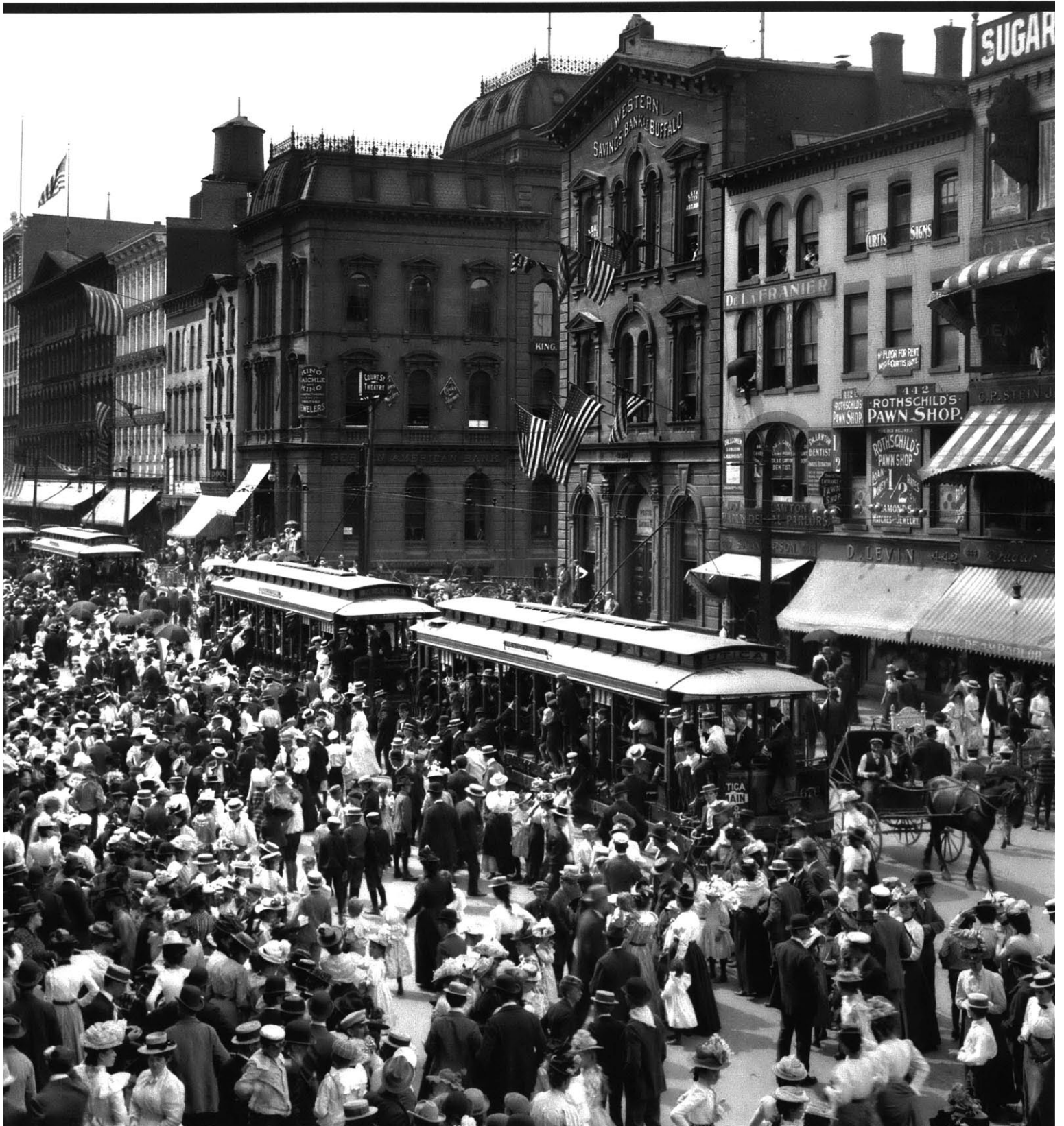
153 Ibid, 507.

154 Ibid, Ibid.

155 Grady Clay. “Impact of the Federal Highway Program” in *Planning 1957* (Washington D.C.: American Society of Planning Officials, 1957), 49.

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CHAPTER TWO





FROM “DOWN TOWN” TO SHOPPERS’ WORLD

“When you’re alone and life is making you lonely,
you can always go Downtown.”

- Petula Clark, “Downtown,” 1965

In Chapter One of this thesis, the history of plans and of the planning profession was reviewed in brief. Chapter Two focuses on the history of downtown in the United States as both a cultural phenomenon and a shopping mecca, the history of the pedestrian within that context, and finally, the response to the plight of both downtown shopping and the pedestrian in the context of decentralization. In comparison to the history of plans and the planning profession prior to 1956, this section focuses to a greater degree on the evolution of critical downtown forms and institutions, in particular the department store and the shifting demands of consumers that accompanied the rise of the automobile. The history of downtown business coalitions, parking provisions, storefront design, and transportation will all surface as critical themes throughout this chapter.

The Invention of Downtown

As the urban historian Robert Fogelson charts in this work *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950*, the notion of “downtown” is a uniquely American phenomenon. First used in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, its origins can be traced to New York in the 1840s, when “down town” was used to distinguish the business district of Lower Manhattan from the residential or “up town” areas to the north.¹⁵⁶ As the term spread to other American cities, it gradually lost its geographic connotation and became synonymous with the central business area. Fogelson states that “although hard to define, downtown was easy to locate,” since it represented the confluence of major railroads and horse-drawn trolleys

2.1

(left)

Labor Day Crowd, Main Street,
Buffalo, New York. 1900.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Original copyright by Detroit
Photographic Co.

156 Robert M. Fogelson. *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (Yale University Press, 2003), 11.

2.2

A View of the Northwest Corner of 7th and Hill Street. Downtown Los Angeles, 1926.

Courtesy of Water and Power Associates: Mulholland-Scattergood Collection



by the 1880s, as well the location of the city's tallest buildings and major shopping areas thereafter.¹⁵⁷ To Europeans, the American downtown had significant differences from their own centers. The most striking of these was what Frederick Law Olmsted...called in 1871 "a strong and increasing tendency toward the separation of businesses and residences" owing to "a fixed tendency among civilized men' to enhance the 'cleanliness and purity' of domestic life."¹⁵⁸ Others attributed the rise of downtown as a business district alone to property values in downtown districts that made downtown living prohibitively expensive and unreasonable.¹⁵⁹ Organizations of downtown interests at that time most often took the form of citywide associations, since the interests of downtown and those of the outlying districts were perceived as unified prior the 1920s. While a certain degree of competition had always existed, especially as transit lines and elevated railways expanded outwards, the interests of downtown remained tethered and at times indistinguishable from those of the city at large in the early twentieth century.

The notion of a downtown embedded within or as only one part of a larger metropolitan region began to emerge in the 1920s, and is reflected in the increasing use of the term "Central Business District." Though used as early as 1904 in Baltimore, the "central business district" became increasingly popular as a term in planning and transportation documents in recognition of a growing number of secondary retail and business centers sprouting along major transportation lines.¹⁶⁰ The

157 Fogelson, 13.

158 Ibid, 21.

159 Ibid, 23.

160 Ibid, 184.

Newark City Planning Commission used the term in its city plan from 1913, produced by Harland Bartholomew, and in 1923, the University of Chicago sociologist Ernest W. Burgess presented the Central Business District as part of his concentric zonal theory of the American city (the other zones being the Zone of Workingmen's Homes, the Residential Zone or Zone of Better Residences at the edge of the city, and the Commuters' Zone.)

The other significant phenomenon that helped to establish downtown "as a small but extremely powerful magnet" was its stature as a shopping district.¹⁶¹ In the late 1800s, major shopping streets like 'Ladies Mile' on Broadway in New York and State Street in Chicago attracted throngs of female shoppers each day.¹⁶² Women played a significant role in fueling the momentum of downtown retail, as well as in the civic improvement campaigns that were spearheaded by progressive era reformers. In the early 1900s, the dry goods emporium, or the department store, expanded as a major institution in the downtowns all around the country. The downtown of every major city in the United States had a department store at its heart. In his history of retail decentralization in Los Angeles, Richard Longstreth says of the department store, "No other kind of business activity and no infrastructural project appears to have matched the impact of this commercial enterprise in setting the main paths and parameters of downtown into the mid-twentieth century."¹⁶³ Longstreth, using Los Angeles as a case study and a bellwether for the nation at large, follows the sequence of competitive building campaigns that underscored retail and department store branch expansion in the first fifty years of the twentieth century. Beginning with the rise of Hollywood as a satellite downtown that challenged the traditional shopping streets of Spring Street and Broadway in Downtown Los Angeles, Longstreth traces the successive iterations and typologies of branch dispersal, along with the persistent response of entrenched downtown retailers to compete with outlying centers.

Early Retail Decentralization: The Rise of the Taxpayer Block

Retail decentralization went through multiple phases throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The first wave took the form of low-lying

161 Fogelson, 15.

162 Ibid, Ibid.

163 Richard W. Longstreth. *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1950* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 24.



2.3

Taxpayer blocks beyond Downtown.
View of San Pedro Street, looking
north from Washington Boulevard.
Los Angeles, California, 1926.
Courtesy of Water and Power
Associates: Mulholland-Scattergood
Collection

taxpayer blocks,¹⁶⁴ which tended to follow streetcar lines emanating from the center and were oriented around small purchases of convenience. Most of these buildings stood only one to two-stories in height and the selection and range of goods to be purchased were limited. Some small commercial areas boasted movie theaters and bank branches as well. Very few of these developments, however, were built as part of an integrated neighborhood building campaign, though the presence of these amenities certainly supported the expansion of residential areas.¹⁶⁵ Larger commercial nodes tended to cluster near streetcar intersections. In the 1920s, in Los Angeles and other cities quick to adopt the automobile, counting cars became a critical barometer for determining business location and activity.¹⁶⁶

The rise of the taxpayers and commercial nodes was followed by two successive developments. The first was the advent of branch stores in the 1920s, epitomized first by Hollywood and then by Wilshire Boulevard's emergence as a rival to Downtown Los Angeles. While stores may have had specialty branches in outlying centers, it was not at all typical to develop large branches that could rival downtown at first. That changed when B.H. Dyas in 1927 announced the unprecedented move of constructing

164 See Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*, 64-65. Longstreth states that "taxpayer blocks were built as speculative enterprises by property owners wishing the most profitable use for their land...If owners believed that their land would soon rise in value to the point that they might sell it at a handsome profit, many others probably realized that change might not be so rapid and were content with the income from their investment."

165 Longstreth, 62.

166 *Ibid*, 67.

a branch of his department store in Hollywood, which would be larger than his downtown location.¹⁶⁷ Though the move floundered with the Depression, other department stores followed suit, announcing their own plans for Hollywood locations. The problem with Hollywood, as well as other outlying centers in its mold after the 1920s, was parking.

“The Parking Evil”

Parking proved a terrible frustration to downtown, main streets, and other streetcar commercial nodes as automobiles proliferated. Even before then, downtown had become increasingly under siege by streetcar traffic, leading to a growing dissatisfaction and an increasingly negative reputation for congestion in the central business district. For public officials, the problems of congestion and parking could stand at odds. Curbside parking bans in the downtown eased traffic flow, but had the specter of killing business.¹⁶⁸ Longstreth sums up the parking problem as one of “disparate needs among patrons, workers, and property owners.”¹⁶⁹ “Many executives” he says, “wanted convenient parking for themselves. Major business owners focused on provisions for their own customers rather than for the shopping district as a whole. Small-scale merchants, for the most part, believed the problem lay beyond their abilities to change. Patrons wanted to park as close as possible to their destinations, but some might only remain for a short period, while others spent the better part of the day downtown.”¹⁷⁰ Off-street lots were most often developed by private parties, often at the expense of demolishing small buildings near prime locations, which over time created a significant loss of overall street frontage.¹⁷¹ During the Depression, owners in Detroit’s central business district frequently demolished buildings of six or more stories in favor of surface parking due to falling rental incomes and high property taxes.¹⁷² Nonetheless, fear that without parking, customers would forsake downtown for outlying centers provided enough impetus for some downtown interests to seek common ground and build large lots for their customers. In Los Angeles, the Broadway Department Store constructed a two-story underground garage at great expense in 1929, though this represented an anomaly at the time.

The problem of parking in the American downtown from the 1920s onward cannot be overstated. As congestion worsened, cities and downtown businesses began trying different strategies to solve the parking problem. As David Smiley states in his work *Pedestrian Modern* (2013),

167 Longstreth, 86.

168 Ibid, 5.

169 Ibid, 43-44

170 Ibid, Ibid.

171 Ibid, 45.

172 Isenberg, *Downtown America*. 139.

“Municipal regulation of street use and design became the norm and included partial and whole parking bans, loading bans, through streets and designated turn lanes, left-turn bans, one-way streets, new forms of signaling, restricted lanes, and ‘platform safety islands’ were all tried to solve ‘the parking evil.’”¹⁷³ Others tested unconventional street layouts, such as a proposal by the Regional Plan Association from 1936 to locate parking in common rear lots.¹⁷⁴ Some cities opened municipal parking lots in the downtown area, including the Park Square Garage in Boston from the 1920s. A common strategy, especially in smaller cities, was to develop an integrated parking area behind the main storefront facades. One of the first of this type was developed by the suburban town of Garden City, Long Island and then later mimicked in Greenwich, Connecticut, Beverly Hills, California, and Kalamazoo, Michigan.¹⁷⁵

Country Club Plaza and the First Shopping Centers

Concerns over parking and early population shifts away from the center drove a number of early experiments in shopping centers that would shape the future of American retail. The most significant of these was J.C. Nichols’ Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, begun in 1922. A real estate developer who had among the founding members of the American Institute of Planners in 1917, Nichols developed the Plaza as an early shopping center to serve Kansas City’s genteel Country Club District, which he had begun developing in the early 1900s. Designed in the Spanish style as early as the 1920s, the center was innovative in several respects. It was managed and owned directly by Nichols’ company, included dedicated common parking areas (though Nichols had originally not provided enough parking), and was intended as a major regional destination.¹⁷⁶

Country Club Plaza had a number of imitators following its success. In Los Angeles, Westwood Village, built in 1929 in coordination with surrounding subdivision development, contained such provisions as service alleys and diagonal parking (the legality of which was initially challenged by the police department and unresolved until 1937).¹⁷⁷ Planned by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Charles Cheney prior to the opening of the Plaza, but implemented after, the well-to-do community of Palos Verdes contained provisions for several neighborhood commercial centers. Even though these planned centers were replete with “Latin

173 David J. Smiley. *Pedestrian Modern: Shopping and American Architecture, 1925-1956*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 97.

174 Smiley, 101.

175 Ibid, 109. Also see Isenberg, Chapter 4.

176 Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*. 173.

177 Ibid, 174.



2.4

An early shopping plaza, Highland Park Village, Dallas, Texas. Opened 1931. Designer: Fooshee and Cheek. Developer: Flippen-Prather.

Credit: Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro. *Shopping Centers: Design and Operation* (Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1951), 90.

allusions,” they nevertheless made several modern advances that would become standard later on, such a large central parking plaza and the separation of through and local traffic.¹⁷⁸

Modernizing Main Street

While outlying planned centers remained embryonic in the 1920s and 1930s, older business districts embarked on aggressive modernization campaigns during the 1930s and 1940s as an effort to revive lagging sales during the Depression. “Harping on eye appeal and design taste,” suggests Alison Isenberg in *Downtown America*, “modernizers capitalized upon the previous decade’s preoccupation with women’s desires and buyer psychology. Modernization also highlighted the role of architectural style in determining real estate values.”¹⁷⁹ Modernization was seen as imperative to extend the useful life of a building. As Harland Bartholomew stated in his 1930 *Plan for Knoxville*, “Antiquated and unattractive store fronts” could “impair the value of property.” Failure to modernize could “end a structure’s economic life.”¹⁸⁰

Isenberg notes that whereas plans in the progressive era had largely overlooked storefront design as a “private architectural choice” secondary to a larger scheme, the “modernizers of the 1930s appreciated the harmonizing qualities within each storefront design, not how the stores harmonized with the downtown streetscape as a collective and magnetic destination.”¹⁸¹ During this period, numerous competitions were

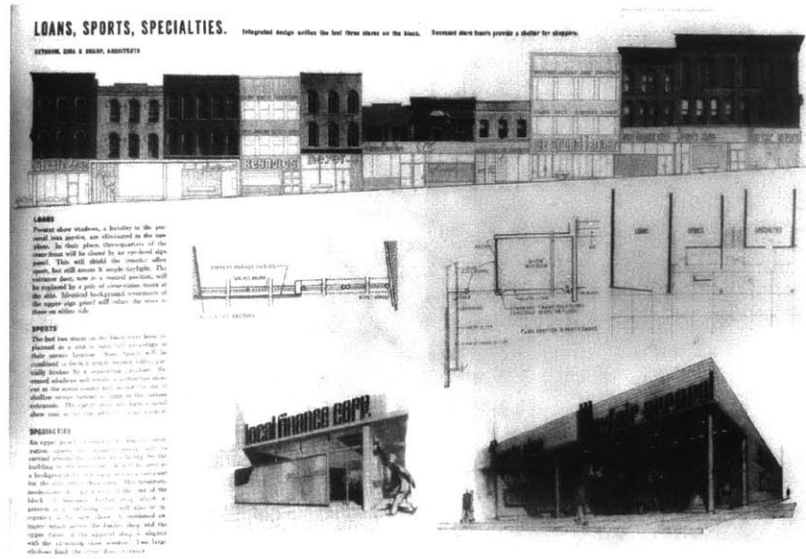
178 Longstreth, 157.

179 Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 143.

180 Ibid, 144.

181 Ibid, 148-149.

2.5
 Ketchum, Gina, and Sharp,
 "Remodeling Main Street: Niles,
 Michigan." *Architectural Forum* 81.
 (October 1944): 110, 111.
 Credit: David Smiley, *Pedestrian
 Modern*, 81.



staged for storefront modernization of Main Street retail. In 1935, the glass manufacturer Libbey-Owens-Ford (LOF) sponsored a competition with *Architectural Record*, eventually published as *52 Ways to Modernize Main Street with Glass*.¹⁸² The aluminum manufacturer Kawneer hosted a competition called "Store Fronts of Tomorrow." The results of the competition, which was chaired by the well-known storefront designer Morris Ketchum and included the modern architect Mies Van Der Rohe as a juror, focused on the architecture of individual store. Other proposals, however, such as Ketchum, Gina, and Sharp's 1944 "Remodeling Main Street" project for Niles, Michigan, considered storefront modernization as an ensemble. In the study, says David Smiley, "the traditional street wall was maintained, so the most dramatic feature of the design language was the plasticity of the design along the street...Modernist transparency and spatial continuity were achieved, and an integration with industrial and merchandising practices had provided the means."¹⁸³

One of the persistent challenges faced by main streets and downtown business districts was an overall lack of coordination in planning and development. Competition between department stores persisted even as they faced a common competitor in the suburbs. While programs such as rear parking or storefront modernization could have been coordinated by a merchants association, such organizations were either absent or ineffective in the 1930s and 1940s, when downtowns came increasingly under threat.¹⁸⁴ Instead, retailers and developers continued to experiment

182 Isenberg, 144. "52 Ways to Modernize Main Street with Glass." (Toledo, OH: Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company, 1935)

183 Smiley, *Pedestrian Modern*, 80-81.

184 Longstreth, 196.

with new forms of parking, retail management, and design in growing areas at the outskirts of the city.

Early Regional Shopping Centers in Los Angeles

In 1941, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning published a model scheme for an outlying business center.¹⁸⁵ The proposal included many of the emerging formal arrangements evident in both the old downtown undergoing reconfiguration and the new village centers sprouting at the periphery. In the scheme, a central boulevard planted with trees bisected a major arterial. Off of the arterial roadway, a circumferential one-way ring road split and curled around the block, permitting access into rear parking areas and forming a kind of ring road around the shopping area. Smaller streets cut through into the shopping area, permitting access into adjacent neighborhoods.¹⁸⁶ The model, created with property owners in Los Angeles' Westchester District, demonstrated how "Main Street [had] reemerged as a springboard for many of the new shopping centers that soon would be built."¹⁸⁷ The scheme also contrasted significantly with concurrent proposals for rehabilitating downtown. A 1942-43 study for the rehabilitation of Los Angeles' Central Business District by the local American Institute of Architects chapter, by contrast, advanced a proposal that would have altered the basic typology of the downtown block as half surface parking and half staid multi-story office slabs. A massive freeway penetrated the center of the proposal, perhaps the most prescient aspect of the otherwise unsuccessful proposition.¹⁸⁸

Two projects in the 1940s would further adapt the basic model scheme for Westchester completed in 1941. The first was LA's Broadway-Crenshaw Center (1947). The Crenshaw Center, upon its opening, was "unlike any other retail development in the nation," with 550,000 square feet of enclosed space, a 2,500 car surface parking lot, and a major department store that served as an anchor tenant.¹⁸⁹ The center marked a significant departure from conventional practice in both its layout and its management. Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company financed the project. Broadway, the department store, subleased the space to tenants, retaining a degree of control over the appearance and operation of those stores.¹⁹⁰ In its configuration, the center was "Janus-like"¹⁹¹ with frontage to both the street and the parking lot sides of the buildings. While the

185 Longstreth, 197.

186 Ibid, Ibid.

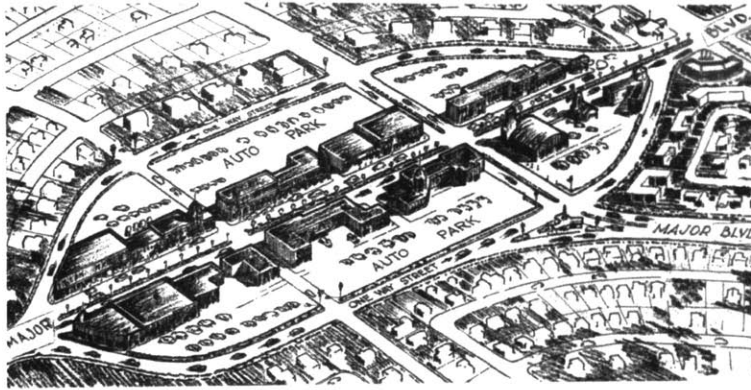
187 Ibid, Ibid.

188 Ibid, 218-219

189 Ibid, 231-232.

190 Ibid, 232.

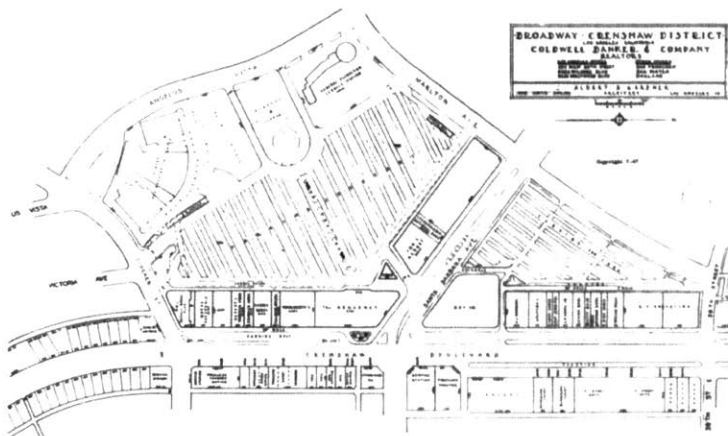
191 Ibid, 233.



2.6
 Plan for development of outlying business centers, Department of City Planning, 1941. (*Los Angeles Times*, 9 February 1941, V-3.)
 Credit: Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*, 197.



2.7
 Westchester Business Center, aerial view looking south, 1964. Photo courtesy Howard B. Drollinger.
 Credit: Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*, 240.



2.8
 Broadway-Crenshaw Center, Site Plan, 1947. *Urban Land Institute Technical Bulletin*.
 Credit: Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*, 231.

center “retained no vestiges of the idealized town center or the high rise metropolis,”¹⁹² executives still anticipated a fair amount of pedestrian traffic arriving directly at the store. As a result, its design accorded the pedestrian rather than looking inward or towards the parking lot alone, as later centers would. The out-facing facades of the building echoed the modern storefront design ideas by architects like Victor Gruen, Morris Lapidus, and Morris Ketchum, who had all begun their careers in restyling storefront window displays downtown.¹⁹³ After opening in 1947, the Broadway-Crenshaw Center “proved a gold mine”¹⁹⁴ and set an important precedent in both its tenant-leasing structure and physical design.

A second example of 1940s shopping center development in Los Angeles was the previously mentioned Westchester Business Center. The center’s owners, Superior Oil Company and Security-First National Bank, had worked closely with LA’s City Planning Department on the scheme for the complex.¹⁹⁵ When it opened in the 1940s, the business center initially struggled to attract an anchor tenant, but eventually brought in Milliron’s Department Store. While ultimately less successful at its start than Broadway-Crenshaw, in part due to a lack of central control in the leasing structure agreement and other factors, Westchester filled its entire site by the 1960s.

Management structure proved to be a critical turning point in the success of large satellite commercial centers and one of the major features that would distinguish them from old main streets and downtowns. As Longstreth suggests, “adhering to the tradition of multiple ownership generated more than the anticipated difficulties in creating car lots. Each purchaser had to buy a section of the parking area equal to the width of the streetfront property and improve the parcel according to a uniform standard...Many merchants balked at these stipulations.”¹⁹⁶ The physical form that resulted from piecemeal development suffered equally, with a patchwork of paved areas and uncoordinated design arrangements.

One advance that the Westchester Business Center did pioneer, however, came in the realm of design. Milliron’s Department Store, the site’s major tenant, provided the first large scale design commission for Victor Gruen. Gruen used the Westchester project to test new concepts in retail architecture. His design included rooftop parking with “ramps... treated as futuristic sculptural elements to entice shoppers.”¹⁹⁷ The sequence into the store from the rooftop deck was meant to be more than

192 Longstreth, 234.
193 Ibid, 234.
194 Ibid, 232.
195 Ibid, 241-242.
196 Ibid, 243.
197 Ibid, 243.

a department store alone, with a “restaurant, auditorium, beauty shop, and children’s playroom.”¹⁹⁸ Gruen would later go on to further this concept in his regional shopping centers and downtown pedestrian malls, which will be discussed later in the thesis. While Gruen’s original design has since been altered, and its rooftop parking eliminated, the Milliron’s building still stands (and is now a Kohl’s Department Store). The Westchester Business Center, meanwhile, retains a footprint similar to what was initially envisioned by its planners.

While Los Angeles was a significant leader in the development of outlying shopping centers and of experiments in automotive planning, freeway building, and retail, it was by no means the only place experimenting with such concepts. Indeed, during World War II, planners and architects were testing the ideas and design concepts that would guide postwar development. To understand the emergence of the shopping mall in the 1940s and subsequently the pedestrian mall in the late 1950s however, it is important to first revisit the evolution of the pedestrian in urban life in the first half of the twentieth century.

From King’s Highway to the Elevated Street

Beginning in the early twentieth century, the advent of the automobile fundamentally changed people’s relationship to the street. Prior to the rise of “motordom,” the coalition of municipal traffic engineers, traffic commissions, and auto interests,¹⁹⁹ streets had been defined by a common law principle that was defined by the traffic expert Miller McClintock as the “ancient rule...that all persons have an equal right in the highway, and that in exercising the right each shall take due care not to injure other users of the way.”²⁰⁰ While the streetcar and the bicycle after it had created a menace to the pedestrian,²⁰¹ neither had had the financial clout or organizational capacity to fully reframe the relationship of the pedestrian to the street itself.

In his account of early automotive history and the street *Fighting Traffic* (2008), Peter Norton traces how the automobile shifted from an unwanted intruder in the street to its primary user. The shift from common law street to motorway took place through what Norton refers to as a

198 Longstreth, 245.
199 Peter Norton, *Fighting Traffic: the Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), 3.

200 Quoted from Norton, 289, *Report and Recommendations of the Metropolitan Street Traffic Survey* (Chicago Association of Commerce, 1926), 133. According to Norton’s research, an “1812 ruling of Britain’s Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough” on the right to the king’s highway was “still cited by American courts in the 1920s.”

201 This is embodied in the term “Trolley Dodger,” which gave the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team their nickname.

“rhetorical closure” and “closure by redefinition of the problem.”²⁰² Over the course of the first twenty years of the automobile, motordom engaged in an organized campaign to reframe the shocking casualties to pedestrians by careless drivers as a springboard for reframing the relationship between pedestrians and traffic. National safety campaigns, safe pedestrian zones, and crosswalks together restricted pedestrian movements. In the 1920s, the future of the automobile in the city was anything but certain. Grief-stricken mothers organized campaigns for pedestrian safety weeks and lobbied for the erection of public monuments to child accident victims.²⁰³ A well publicized campaign in Cincinnati in 1923 sought to pass an ordinance requiring “speed governors” limiting automobiles to 25 miles per hour or less.²⁰⁴ While the ordinance failed to pass, auto interests saw the fight as a critical turning point in their legitimization as street users.

Traffic Control and the Rise of the Municipal Traffic Expert

At the same time, paralleling the rise of automobiles in cities was a rising cadre of professionally trained highway engineers. Though New York City had instituted its first traffic rules in 1903 based on the work of an “eccentric” named William Eno (*prior to* the advent of the automobile),²⁰⁵ the rise of the technical traffic expert institutionalized ideals of efficiency and separation. To a certain degree, the rise of the traffic engineer in the spatial construction of the city parallels the rise of a progressive mindset that fueled early comprehensive planning. Prior to the widespread institution of traffic controls, including striping and signals, policemen tended to be charged with the administration of traffic.

Inefficient management and increasing congestion led progressive era reformers and local chambers of commerce to enlist “efficiency experts” who could apply emerging rules of “scientific management” and Taylorism to the traffic problem.²⁰⁶ They turned to engineers, who even before 1900 had become consultants for streets and other public utilities.²⁰⁷ “Engineers showed cities how they could both improve services and reduce costs...Experts in sanitation, public utilities, conservation, and scientific management showed people that with the right regulation they could alleviate many problems—especially city problems—to the

202 Norton, *Fighting Traffic*, 5.

203 Ibid, 45-46.

204 Ibid, 97.

205 Ibid, 51.

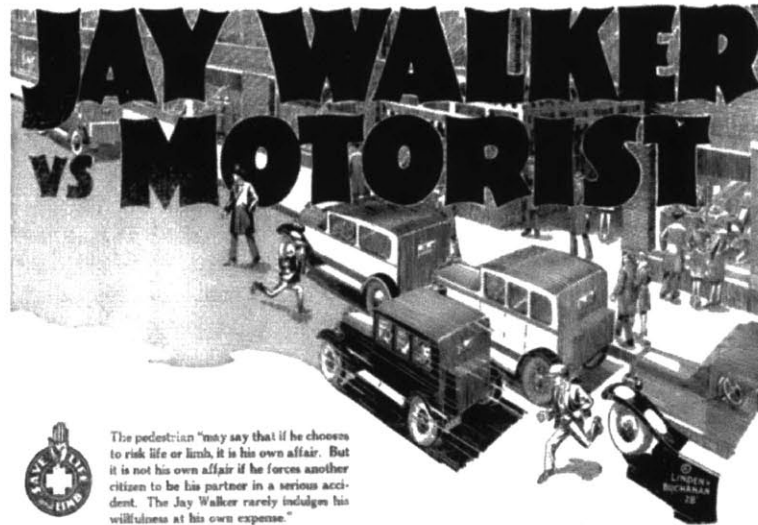
206 Ibid, 111-112.

207 Since planning at the time remained a fledgling profession, many of these experts were in fact planner-engineers. Ernest P. Goodrich, Ladislav Segoe, and Harland Bartholomew are representative of this type and played an active role in professional traffic engineering associations as well as city planning groups.

2.9

"Jaywalker vs. Motorist"

Credit: Peter Norton. *Fighting traffic: the Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).



the surface area of its streets was occupied by parked motor vehicles.”²¹² A variety of restrictions were tried, including bans, time limits, and pricing,²¹³ but many of these measures were difficult to enforce, hampered by miscommunications between municipal engineers and police, or protested by merchants.

The Floor Space Problem

Beginning in the mid-1920s, however, auto interests reframed street congestion from an issue of traffic control towards a “floor space” problem.²¹⁴ Fearing a “saturation crisis,” automobile interests, led by car manufacturers, called for “wider streets and for ‘wholesale replanning and rebuilding.’”²¹⁵ Just as motordom had begun to call for the building of new roads to transcend the saturation point, streetcars trumpeted traffic control as the desirable alternative, fighting the rise of automobiles and the negative impact that they had had on operations. In the early 1920s, a newly formed Los Angeles Traffic Commission engaged Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Harland Bartholomew, and Charles Cheney to draft a Major Street Traffic Plan for the city. While the plan rhetorically embraced traffic control and regulation, it also called for a major campaign of street widenings and new roadway construction as the city’s priority.²¹⁶

By the 1930s, however, the paradigm of traffic control began to shift away from regulation towards increasing “supply.”²¹⁷ In 1927, the Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover created a Model Municipal Traffic Ordinance committee, which was to be led by William Metzger, the President of the Detroit Automobile Club. Metzger’s committee adopted the tenets of the Los Angeles Traffic Ordinance of 1925, which had been adapted from Miller McClintock’s original research.²¹⁸ The ordinance, which became a model code for municipalities, confined pedestrians to sidewalks and crosswalks and required them to yield to motorists outside of crossings. As Norton claims, “the rules overturned pedestrians’ ancient legal supremacy in the street.”²¹⁹ Shifts in the regulation of the street were accompanied by the rise of the highway engineer as a shaper of the built environment.

212 Ibid, Ibid.

213 Oklahoma City was the first city to install parking meters in 1935.

214 Norton, 155.

215 Ibid, 156.

216 Frederick Law Olmsted, Harland Bartholomew, and Charles Henry Cheney, *A Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: the Traffic Commission, May, 1924), 5, 7; also see Norton, 162.

217 Norton, 175.

218 Ibid, 191.

219 Ibid, 193.

2.10

"The City of the Future," Harvey Wiley Corbett, 1913.



2.11

Committee on Fifty-ninth Street and Traffic Studies. Harvey Wiley Corbett. Delineator: Hugh Ferriss. Prepared for the *Regional Plan of New York and its Environs*, 1929.



Highway engineers differed from municipal traffic control experts. Their expertise had grown out of efforts to build transcontinental highways and farm to market county roads. Highway engineers designed roads for high speed safety and free flow rather regulation and traffic control. In 1930, State Highway Engineers in New Jersey constructed the first cloverleaf interchange. In 1937, the Shell Oil company engaged Miller McClintock and the industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes to create a model for the “automotive city of tomorrow,”²²⁰ which *The New York Times* described as a “pedestrian heaven” and a “city of the future where the pedestrian can walk without fear of sudden death and the motorist can always find a parking space.”²²¹ For the 1939-1940 World’s Fair in New York, General Motors commissioned Geddes to expand the City of Tomorrow into *Futurama*, an exhibit that would be twice its scale. As part of the exhibit, “Raised walkways kept pedestrians safely above motor traffic. The pavilion included a full scale mock-up of such an intersection; fairgoers looked down from elevated sidewalks to a street intersection crowded with stationary GM cars and trucks.”²²²

Harvey Wiley Corbett and the Vertical Utopia

The “City of Tomorrow” was not the first scheme to celebrate the vertical (or for that matter, horizontal) separation of pedestrians from vehicle traffic. Vertical separation had been a feature of modernization even dating back to the era of Frederick Law Olmsted, who had separated traffic flows using overpasses and underpasses for horse-drawn carriages in Central Park. In the 1860s, New York City briefly had a pedestrian overpass running over Broadway in Lower Manhattan. Multi-level streets were a common motif in futuristic visions of cities from the late nineteenth century onward.²²³ The reclamation of an insulated pedestrian realm free from the ills and dangers of street traffic had been proposed by the French architect-urban planner Eugène Hénard as early as 1903, when he proposed separation between vehicles and pedestrians as well as so-called pedestrian zones as part of his roundabout schemes for Paris.²²⁴ In 1913, the architect Harvey Wiley Corbett depicted views of a future New York that included three pedestrian walkway levels stacked on top of one another and segregated from traffic.²²⁵ Corbett, working for the Regional

220 Norton, 249.

221 “Pedestrian Heaven in City of Future is Exhibited Here,” *The New York Times* (New York, NY), July 20, 1937. Also see Norton, 249.

222 Norton, 250.

223 Fogelson, *Downtown*, 261.

224 Paul Rabinow. *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 255.

225 Nicholas, Fyfe ed. *Images of the street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 47.

Plan of New York's "Fifty-ninth Street and Traffic Studies" in 1923 commissioned the delineator Hugh Ferriss to prepare sketches depicting the future of New York City, including raised pedestrian streets with covered arcades overlooking two stories of traffic. Corbett touted the "three deck city" as a solution to the "archaic" sidewalk system of the city. "Under this arrangement," proclaimed Corbett, "streets would be bridged at the sidewalk level and foot traffic never become mixed with wheel traffic. Shops and stores and entrances to buildings would be placed at the level of the elevated sidewalk. This leaves wheel traffic where it already is, on the surface of the earth. Thus its level doesn't have to be dug out or built up."²²⁶

Corbett's proposal and its accompanying graphics might have seemed outlandish and costly, yet in the 1920s and 1930s, cities were seriously considering such proposals. Chicago's Wacker Drive was "double-decked" in 1926 and even earlier, in the mid-nineteenth century, much of the city had been raised to account for persistent drainage problems. Highway engineers in late 1920s Los Angeles spent \$350,000 for pedestrian underpasses geared towards children and a similar provision was made for the planned community of Radburn, New Jersey.²²⁷ In the discourse of modern architecture, the separation of vehicles and pedestrians had been one of the primary recommendations of the 1933 Athens Charter. Le Corbusier's *Le Ville Radieuse* (1924) and *Plan Voisin* (1925) both featured separate realms for pedestrians and vehicle traffic. According to research by David Smiley, one of the first comprehensive investigations of pedestrian-vehicle separation was conducted by Louis Parnes, a Swiss architect who had worked with Le Corbusier. He created in the 1940s an "urban design primer" which concluded definitively that "a modern street is either a traffic street or a shopping street. It cannot be both."²²⁸ Still, in the 1930s, these proposals were predominantly focused on solving issues of circulation, rather than engendering public life. Indeed, not until the 1940s and 1950s did the pedestrian become a primary object of design at such a scale. Even as *Futurama* portended its "pedestrian heaven," the scheme represented, for the pedestrian at least, what was essentially the "storefront modernization" of earlier schemes drafted by Hugh Ferriss and Corbett.

Neighborhood Shopping Centers

If the focus of the 1920s and 1930s had been on storefront modernization and rear surface parking provisions, the 1940s introduced the first large

226 Harvey Wiley Corbett as quoted in Uthai Vincent Wilcox. "The Three Deck City is Coming." *Modern Mechanics*, 1931.

227 Norton, 239.

228 Dr. Louis Parnes, *Planning Stores that Pay*, 13. Also see Smiley, *Pedestrian Modern*, 125-126.

scale thinking about prototypes that resembled shopping centers. In the latter half of his book *Pedestrian Modern*, David Smiley charts the history of the pedestrian in architectural discourse from the early 1940s through the mid-1950s. The period stretching from the United States' entry into World War II until the passage of the Interstate Highway Act was a critical and formative moment in the history of cities and architecture. The destruction of European cities in World War II offered a *carte blanche* for the application of modernist ideals of urban design. For the United States, the creeping of "blight," the onset of decentralization, and the widespread adoption of the private automobile would have a formidable impact on the shape of the city, preempting a complete reshaping the American landscape.

Smiley situates the legacy of the pedestrian within the discourse of modernism at the confluence of retail modernization, in which "the pedestrian attained the status of civic actor, citizen, architectural and planning premise, and targeted consumer,"²²⁹ and the neighborhood unit, which "framed...the pedestrian citizen" as an actor "whose liberty would reactivate normal social intercourse" and "neighborliness."²³⁰ The neighborhood unit, which had been conceived by Clarence Perry for *The Regional Plan of New York and its Environs* in 1929, represented an evolution of the garden city satellite town planning ideals embodied by Forest Hills Gardens in Queens, Long Island and later, Radburn, New Jersey. The unit concept provided a "natural area that would enable (or stimulate) the identity, neighborliness, and familiarity that were seemingly absent from the anomie and brutality of the larger city...new physical and administrative borders would enable a neighborly refuge in which schools, churches, shops, and community spaces were now accessible by foot—as in a village—and thus were cohesive."²³¹ Neighborhood unit ideals became pervasive in the 1930s and 1940s in both the United States and in Europe, though the metaphor to the village was strongest in Britain and the United States.

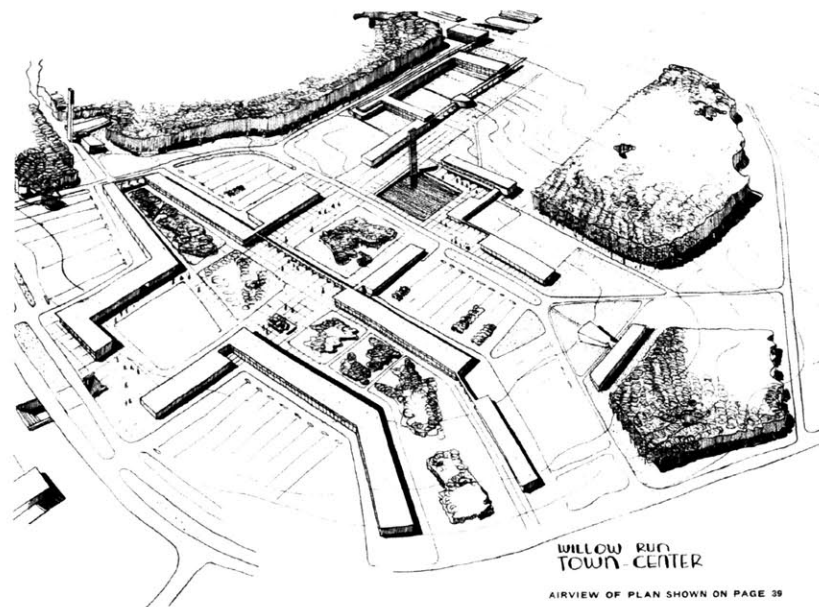
Beginning in the 1930s, shopping centers began to emerge as an integral aspect of neighborhood unit proposals. In 1934, Catherine Bauer and Clarence Stein collaborated on an article for *Architectural Record* called "Store Buildings and Neighborhood Shopping Centers." Referring to precedents available at the time, including the recent shopping center at Radburn Plaza, the pair sketched a basic plan for a neighborhood shopping center with grade separated interchanges, surface parking, and parks and

229 Smiley, *Pedestrian Modern*, 134.

230 Ibid, 136.

231 Ibid, Ibid.

2.12
“Willow Run Town Center,”
Architectural Forum (March 1943): 37.



play spaces for children.²³² Another example of a neighborhood shopping center from that era was the Greenbelt shopping center (Wadsworth and Ellington, 1937), which had a plaza and connected covered walkways.²³³

In the early 1940s, the neighborhood unit ideals were adapted in design of World War II “bomber towns,” including Willow Run outside of Detroit and Linda Vista outside of San Diego. Linda Vista Shopping Center (1943) included an enclosed arcade, stores, and parking and was, according to *Architecture Forum* “the first full dress presentation of the Grass-on-Main-Street idea.”²³⁴ An unbuilt scheme from the same period for the bomber town of Willow Run designed by Eero Saarinen in 1943 contained a large town center with five neighborhood units. The plan included a large pedestrian precinct forming a rough cruciform-plan with peripheral parking along the edge.

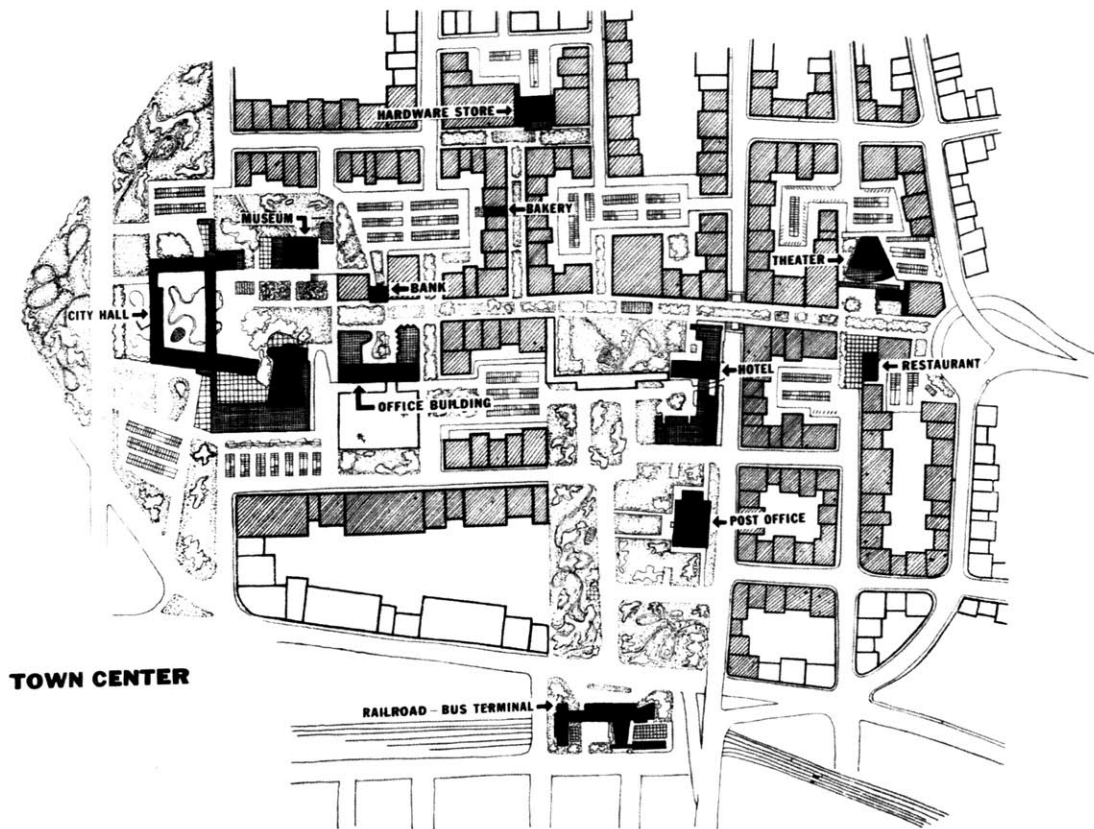
Pedestrianizing Main Street: Syracuse and the Rye Plan

In the early 1940s, downtown retail and peripheral centers were generally seen as complementary, rather than oppositional. Even as downtown retail sagged, few called for its abandonment or could have conceived of outlying shopping districts undermining its strong foundation. Further, retail modernization campaigns and rear parking lots being applied on Main Street and Downtowns followed the same basic principles that were being tested in the new centers. Nonetheless, as reflected in the bomber

232 Smiley, 141.

233 Ibid, 142.

234 Ibid, 143.



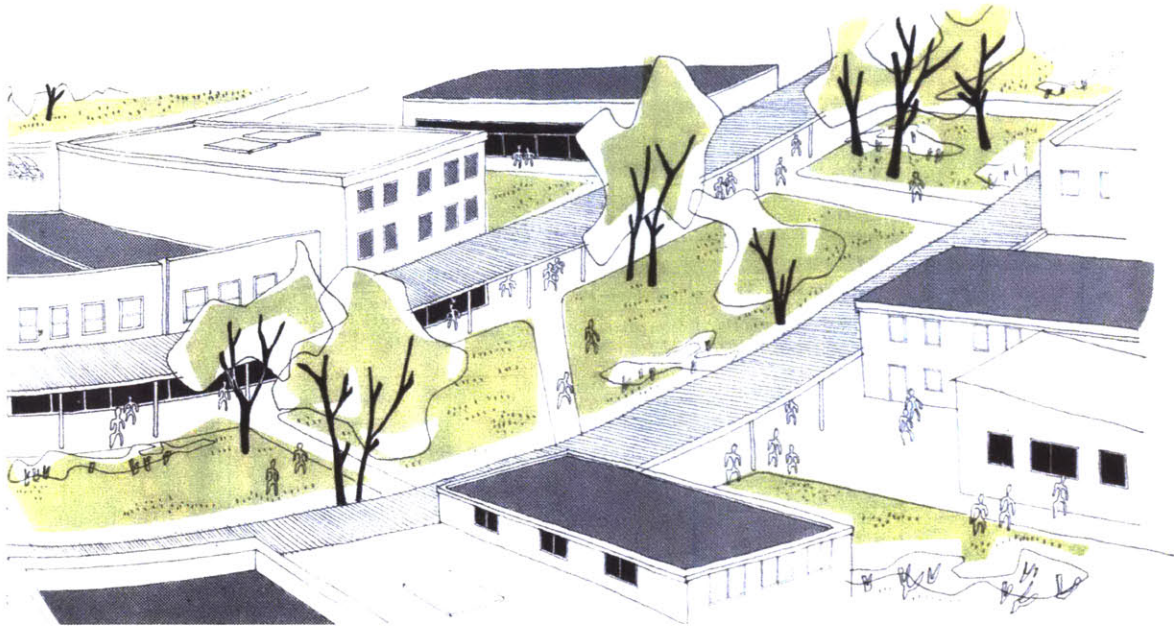
towns and early shopping centers of Los Angeles, much of the physical experimentation at this time had focused on new construction rather than retrofits.

The first figure to fully address the pedestrianization of an existing main street was the designer George Nelson. Nelson, though best known as a furniture designer, became a managing editor of *Architectural Forum* beginning in 1943. Shortly after assuming his role as editor, Nelson put out a call to architects and designers to devise proposals for the dilapidated center of Syracuse, New York, which were compiled in a special issue of *Architectural Forum* titled “New Buildings for 194X.”²³⁵ While many of the proposals by well-known architects of the time were for buildings, “each was conceived as an extension of the city’s main pedestrian ‘mall.’”²³⁶ The Syracuse proposal offered a unique synthesis of ideas percolating at the time and included provisions for rear or internal parking structures as well as highway interchanges to provide access to the city (albeit at a much smaller scale than those of Futurama). As the champion of the concept, Nelson continued this dialogue through an “Anytown” Main Street proposal that

2.13
Town Center, “New Buildings for 194X,” *Architectural Forum* 78 (1943): 71.

235 Town Center in “New Buildings for 194x,” *Architectural Forum* 78 (May 1943): 71. Also see Smiley, 148-153.

236 Smiley, 149.



2.14

Ketchum, Gina, and Sharp, "Rye Plan" (Rye, New York), *Architectural Forum* 85 (1946): 78-79.

circulated through a series of pamphlets and which abstracted the basic elements of the Syracuse plan, including a thick greenbelt surrounding the surface parking areas.²³⁷ According to Smiley, "Nelson conjured up an irresistible imagery of 'old pavement and trolley tracks' replaced by 'long stretches of lawn, paved walks, benches, fountains, flowerbeds and trees.' With tables, 'splashing fountains,' public sculpture, and small playgrounds for the kids of shopping moms, this new pedestrian form would be a better urbanism."²³⁸

Building upon Nelson's schematic ideal, Morris Ketchum in 1944 was hired to redesign of the center of Rye, New York as a "pedestrian island" in answer to a commission by the city to revive the prospects of the city's dilapidated main street. Ketchum's Rye Plan was widely seen at the time and appeared on the cover of *Architectural Forum* in 1946. The plan included several elements that would become common features of early malls (in downtowns and suburban locations), such as arcaded walks, unified signage and architectural details, and a central grassy strip.²³⁹ While Rye voters ultimately rejected a bond issue for the project, the proposal nonetheless helped make "Main Street minus auto traffic" a "viable urban image."²⁴⁰ In spite of Nelson and Ketchum's proposals for downtown

237 See George Nelson. *Main Street: Now and Postwar*. Revere Pamphlet 13 (New York: Revere Copper and Brass, 1943), 6.

See also Smiley, 151-52.

238 Smiley, 152.

239 Ketchum, Gina, and Sharp. "Rye Plan" (Rye, New York), *Architectural Forum* 85 (1946): 78-79. See also Smiley, 160-61.

240 Smiley, 162.

Syracuse and Rye in the 1940s, it was in the suburbs, not the city, where the first malls would flourish.

The Emergence of Regional Shopping Centers

Before the 1940s, few Americans could have imagined the kind of inversion in retail fortunes that metropolitan areas around the United States would undergo over the next twenty years. The historian Sam Bass Warner, Jr. called downtown “a metaphor for the metropolis itself” and the “most powerful and recognizable symbol of the American industrial metropolis.”²⁴¹ Most Americans traveled downtown every day to work, shop, and do business. Signs of trouble for downtown had begun as early as the mid-1920s, but accelerated shortly after World War II. Federally insured mortgages and low-interest loans, compounded by inexpensive automobiles and new roads subsidized an exodus to the suburbs. Retail executives and downtown department stores, which had at first been wary of the shift to the suburbs, later saw it as their only option, especially once competitors made the move. Between 1948 and 1954, the downtown retail share dropped by 25 percent in thirteen of the largest metropolitan areas.²⁴²

In spite of its runaway success from the late 1940s onward, the regional shopping mall was anything but inevitable. With a few previously mentioned exceptions, most notably J.C. Nichols Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, “commonly accepted marketing theory held that suburban locations were appropriate only for convenience goods.”²⁴³ The notion of building a huge shopping center “in the middle of a field” was not only illogical, but also, as many department stores owners feared, would drive down sales at their downtown locations.²⁴⁴ The major insurance companies who served as lenders for large shopping centers considered such ventures risky, making them all the more difficult to test.²⁴⁵ When developers finally began experimenting with large-scale suburban retail, they tended to contain vestiges of the traditional main street and the downtown department stores. Yet in the course of experimentation, pioneer mall developers found a unique recipe for design, marketing, management, financing and parking that worked.

The first design for a regional shopping center appeared in 1947 and three years later, the first mall, Northgate outside of Seattle, was completed in 1950. In 1946, Morris Ketchum, who had previously proposed the pedestrianization of Rye, New York’s Main Street and briefly

241 Fogelson, 2.

242 Bernard J. Frieden and Lynne B. Sagalyn. *Downtown, Inc: How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991), 13.

243 Frieden et al., 63.

244 Ibid, Ibid.

245 Ibid, Ibid.



2.15

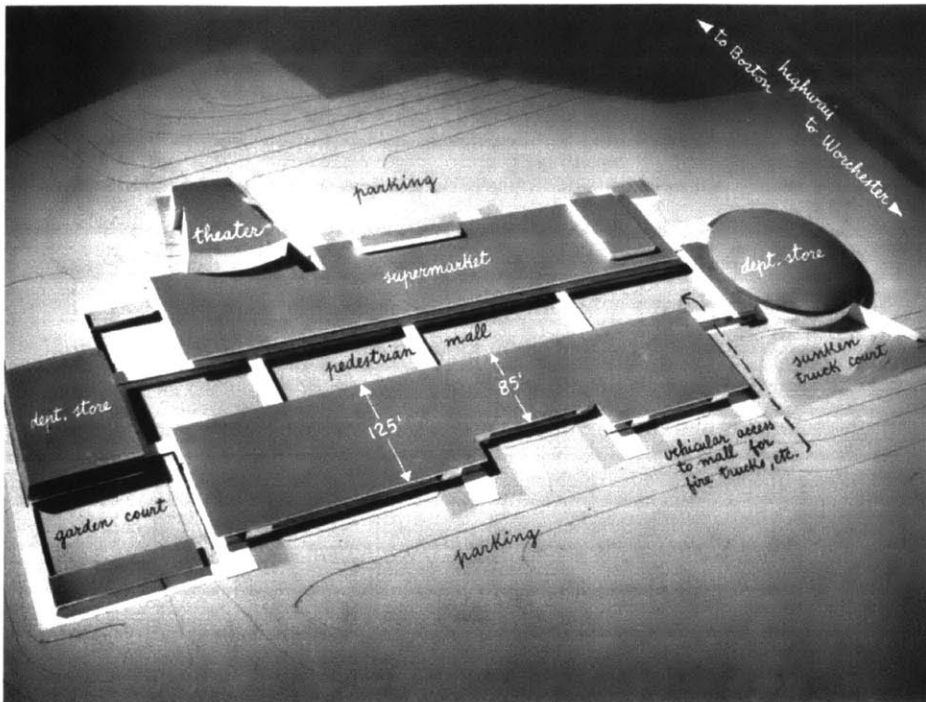
Eastland Shopping Center, Detroit, Michigan, 1950. Architects: Gruen & Krummeck. *Architectural Forum*, August 1950, 111 from Longstrech, *City Center to Regional Mall*, 330.

worked as Victor Gruen's partner as storefront designer in New York City, was commissioned to prepare a design for the Boston-based Conant Real Estate Trust, which had formed that same year to "plan, build and provide equity financing' for a chain of shopping centers."²⁴⁶ In addition to Ketchum, the Trust recruited Kenneth Welch, an early forecaster and economic specialist of automobile based retail schematics based in Grand Rapids, along with a diverse team of leading architects and theorists from the period. Welch, along with another real estate economist and shopping center pioneer Larry Smith, "contributed significantly to the advancement of the regional mall concept by delineating a clear, step-by-step method that made the investigative process comprehensible and convincing. He also became the foremost advocate of siting these complexes far from established business centers and residential areas alike."²⁴⁷ With the Jordan Marsh Department Store as its lead tenant, the architects Ketchum, Gina, and Sharp designed "the Beverly Shopping Center" as a rectangular mall bounded by stores on both sides with an iconic "saucer-shaped" department store at its end.²⁴⁸ The project's central axis had drawn upon precedents and ideas that had been introduced at Saarinen's Willow Run and Nelson's schematic for the pedestrian mall. The project, like many of the period, also echoed the desire of early mall builders to

²⁴⁶ Smiley, 165.

²⁴⁷ Longstreth, 327.

²⁴⁸ Smiley, 166.



replicate the community facilities and public life of downtowns in these new centers. The plan for Beverly called for an exhibition hall, movie theater, recreational buildings and a civic plaza with a lake.²⁴⁹ Reflecting the “uncharted financial territory of new suburban locations,” the Beverly Shopping Center was not built as designed as a result of delays in the construction of Metro Boston’s Route 128 highway. The project instead shifted location to suburban Framingham, where it opened as Shopper’s World in 1951. As built, the reconceived project was a “double-decked Main Street” and turned inward with the parking areas facing the “back” of the stores, departing from the Janus arrangement of the Los Angeles centers and other early schemes.²⁵⁰

Shopper’s World, however, was not the first shopping mall to open in the United States. That distinction went to the Northgate Shopping Mall outside of Seattle, designed by John Graham and Company. Northgate was developed, like the Broadway-Crenshaw Center, under the lead of a regional department store, The Bon Marché, and had eighty stores of a considerable variety as well as a junior department store as part of its complex.²⁵¹ In contrast to Ketchum’s design for Shoppers’ World, however, Northgate included a narrow pedestrian spine that recreated a Main Street (or pedestrian mall) atmosphere, but was regarded by many as spare and

2.16
Ketchum, Gina, and Sharp,
“Middlesex Center, Framingham,
Massachusetts,” from Geoffrey Baker
and Bruno Funaro. *Shopping Centers:
Design and Operation* (New York, NY:
Reinhold Publishing Corporation,
1951), 99.

249 Smiley, 167-68.
250 Ibid. 169.
251 Longstreth, 334.

without frills. Nonetheless, the return on the project was immediate, with The Bon Marché's sales "twice as high as anticipated during its first year of operation."²⁵²

Early pioneers in shopping center design, suggests Longstreth, were "not distinguished by artistic prowess so much as by efficient, no-nonsense resolution of complex programs in which budgetary constraints were paramount."²⁵³ The leader of this group of early shopping center designers was Victor Gruen of Los Angeles, who along with Morris Ketchum of New York, John Graham & Company of Seattle, Welton Beckett & Associates, and Albert C. Martin & Associates of Los Angeles, constituted the core of the designers of early shopping centers in the United States.

From Vienna to Futurama: Victor Gruen Comes to America

Among the foremost pioneers of early shopping center design was the Viennese Jewish architect Victor Gruen. Gruen, originally Victor Gruenbaum, had fled the rise of the Nazis for New York City in 1938. While in Vienna, Gruen had worked for his godfather's architectural firm, Melcher and Steiner. At the same time, he "poured his energies into...cabaret theater and Socialist politics."²⁵⁴ According to Gruen's biographer M. Jeffrey Hardwick, Gruen worked "in the architectural firm by day...[and] performed in Vienna's coffeehouses by night. His short performances, a vaudeville mix of music, slapstick, social critique, and drama, offered something for everyone."²⁵⁵ After arriving to New York in 1938, Gruen found work as a draftsman for several exhibitions at New York's 1939 World's Fair, including in a small capacity on the General Motors' Futurama exhibit.²⁵⁶ "For Gruen, *Futurama* and the fair created an impressive vision...The exhibition...heralded a new way of life in which planners and corporations could work and improve the existing city."²⁵⁷

After his work on the fair, Gruen, like many Jewish architects at that time, entered the fledgling niche of storefront design. Though many American architects viewed retail work as frivolous,²⁵⁸ during the Depression it represented a "largely vacant field"²⁵⁹ in which one's "Jewish identity and outsider status"²⁶⁰ were not as much of an obstacle. Gruen

252 Longstreth, *Ibid.*

253 *Ibid.*, 323.

254 M. Jeffrey Hardwick. *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 10.

255 Hardwick, 10.

256 *Ibid.*, 18.

257 *Ibid.*, 19.

258 *Ibid.*, 20.

259 *Ibid.*, 21.

260 Many of Gruen's first clients were themselves Jewish refugees. See Hardwick, 35.

had already designed several storefronts in Vienna, where retail work was not viewed as low, and in New York, he quickly gained a reputation in the nascent field of storefront modernization. He and his peers, including fellow Jewish designer Morris Lapidus and Morris Ketchum, found storefront commissions as an outlet for experimenting with unconventional designs. His early storefront allowed him to play with recessed arcades and permeable displays meant to lure female shoppers off the sidewalks and “to blur the distinction between window shopping and browsing the sales racks.”²⁶¹ In his storefront work, Gruen used the analogy of “the advertisement and stage.”²⁶² Like his contemporary Morris Lapidus, he saw parallels between storefront design and billboards or posters intended to grab one’s attention through “clarity and legibility.”²⁶³ In his designs, he conceived of storefronts as “little theater displays” with “an audience on the sidewalk, the façade as the curtain, the sign as marquee, and show windows and showroom as the stage, and stockrooms as the backstage.”²⁶⁴

Only two years after arriving the United States, Gruen and his new wife (he had divorced his first wife shortly after arriving in New York) and design partner Elsie Krummeck, were featured a seven-page spread in *Architectural Forum*, in which they discussed their outlook on store design.²⁶⁵ New commissions for Cyril Magnin and Grayson’s stores extended his nascent practice to the national scale, with work in cities across the country, including a series of significant commissions on the West Coast. In his designs for West Coast cities, where automobile traffic was increasingly dominant, Gruen had to fundamentally reconsider his approach to design. Whereas designing for pedestrians required a window display that could lure the female shopper into a glamorous retail environment directly off of the sidewalk, designing to catch the attention of drivers called for a “façade of flourish” and a “roadside display case,” replete with “brilliant neon marquee lighting.”²⁶⁶

Gruen and Krummeck were invited to participate in the 1943 issue of *Architectural Forum* 194X organized by George Nelson. The competition “would force [them] to broaden their vision of retail design beyond one store and to acknowledge the relation between retailing and city.”²⁶⁷ In their 194X proposal, the pair proposed two types of shopping centers, one for the neighborhood scale—as the competition had requested—and a second for an entire city, an “immense ‘office

261 Hardwick, 36.
 262 Ibid, 41.
 263 Ibid, Ibid.
 264 Ibid, 43.
 265 Ibid, 48.
 266 Ibid, 65-66.
 267 Ibid, 74.

center' [that] would be the perfect place for civic organizations, municipal authorities, an auditorium, a first-run movie house, an exhibition hall, specialty stores, and a high-class department store."²⁶⁸ While the 194X work did not result in any commissions for the pair, their proposal incubated some of the ideas that would later emerge in Gruen's first regional shopping center designs in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Victor Gruen's genius in shopping center design was based on "his ability to translate theory into practice—to adapt radical notions of form and space nurtured by the avant-garde to the pragmatic needs of the merchant and the investor, while making the ideas seem as if they originated with retail concerns."²⁶⁹ In 1947, he and Krummeck won a commission to design the Milliron's Department Store as part of the Westchester Business Center in Los Angeles. The Milliron's commission, which was discussed earlier in this chapter and constructed in 1949, proved to be Gruen's "first great break," in which he "let his ideas run wild."²⁷⁰ Following Milliron's, Gruen gained his first commission for a regional shopping center on Whittier Boulevard in Los Angeles. Here, his design broke from established center models. He designed the shopping center as a cruciform plan with stores radiating outward from a central department store. Between the retail spokes lay large swaths of surface parking.

According to Richard Longstreth, "Gruen was among the first figures to criticize the tendency in early postwar retail developments to neglect the one-of-a-kind merchant, arguing that a shopping center should include places specifically designed for such enterprises. Here, some of these stores were enclosed; others formed a market, offering unusual foods that could be carried home or consumed on the premises. The mall proper harbored kiosks, refreshment stands, and other vending booths."²⁷¹ Gruen's unbuilt scheme from 1947 presaged many later developments in the design of shopping malls, while integrating elements of earlier schemes such as the Broadway-Crenshaw Center, Westwood Village, and the Los Angeles Farmers Market. At the turn of the decade, Gruen advanced two more proposals for shopping malls—the Olympic Shopping Circle and Eastland Plaza in Michigan. Both projects had a "hollow core configuration" to reduce the distance between stores and parking. The absence of a central green at the core of the space at Eastland Plaza, however, prioritized the developer's imperative for a "100 percent location" over many of community ideals embedded in his earlier schemes.²⁷²

268 Hardwick, 74.

269 Longstreth, 323.

270 Hardwick, 103.

271 *Ibid.*, 324.

272 Smiley, 192.



2.17
Northland Shopping Center, Detroit,
Michigan, 1954.
Credit: University of Wyoming,
American Heritage Center, Victor
Gruen Papers, (Accession Number
5809, Box 58).

Northland and Southdale: The Shopping Center Comes of Age

Victor Gruen's first large-scale regional shopping mall, the Northland Shopping Center outside Detroit, opened in 1952. The opening came one year after the dissolution of Gruen and Krummeck's marriage and business, and his subsequent formation of Victor Gruen Associates with his new partners, Rudi Baumfield, Karl Van Leuven, and Edgardo Contini. The commission for Northland had come about as a result of Gruen's unique sense of showmanship and fervent self-promotion. Stranded by a snowstorm in Detroit in 1948, he had taken the opportunity of touring Detroit's largest shopping center, J.L. Hudson's. Strip development and "low-priced" department stores along the edge of roads leading away from the city had begun to cut into Hudson's sales and Gruen saw an opportunity for the store to compete with the strip economically, but improve upon its model aesthetically and functionally. Having just finished his design for Milliron's in Los Angeles, Gruen penned a ten-page letter to Hudson's President, Oscar Webber, to convince him of the need to take action.²⁷³ Despite the fact that Webber was "fiercely anti-Semitic,"²⁷⁴ Gruen was able to convince him to create a regional decentralization strategy for Hudson's that would include four regional shopping centers. While the first of Gruen's designs (for the Eastland Shopping Center) was "mothballed" by material shortages due to the Korean War,²⁷⁵ Northland would cement Gruen's reputation and become a landmark in the history of shopping mall design.

273 Hardwick, 106.

274 Ibid, 107.

275 Ibid, 111.

The basic design for Northland rested on Gruen's so-called "cluster" strategy, which consisted of "a variety of pedestrian-only landscaped spaces and routes threading between the center's more than one hundred stores."²⁷⁶ As David Smiley has suggested, the design for Northland projected an "image of collective urban complexity" in which Gruen "cited his own experiences of Viennese social life as an important lesson for urbanity."²⁷⁷ Further, the project's details suggested that architecture could be both "popular and serious"²⁷⁸ and contained pieces of artwork, including sculptures, murals, fountains, and mosaics. Gruen coordinated the art program for the center and "the symbolic role of 'public' art and architecture enabled the shopping center to perform civic, cultural and even psychological functions."²⁷⁹

After his breakthrough at Northland, Gruen's most significant project in his fast rising career as a shopping center architect was the completion of the Southdale Shopping Center in Edina, Minnesota, built between 1953 and 1956 outside of Minneapolis. In late 1952, Oscar Webber, the President of Hudson's had recommended Gruen to Bruce Dayton of Dayton's Department Store in Minneapolis.²⁸⁰ Whereas most of the early malls had relied on either the neighborhood unit town center or the main street as a reference for design, Gruen had long sought to experiment with another precedent in shopping architecture, the gallerias of Milan. While the arcade had served as an inspiration for the recessed storefronts of Gruen's early career,²⁸¹ the form had not been used to date at a large scale in any of the early shopping centers in the United States. While arcades appeared in the United States sporadically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, few had been built and conceived on the scale of either the European models or the American shopping centers. The Westminster (Weybosset) Arcade, built in 1828 in Providence, Rhode Island and a mercantile arcade three stories high and three hundred feet long built in Los Angeles in 1923, provided two important precedents for the enclosed shopping center in the United States, yet these remained anomalies.²⁸²

Gruen's plan for Southdale would not be an arcade per se, but a soaring, climate-controlled central court. Though Gruen had proposed an enclosed space once before, as part of his Montclair Center in Houston,

276 Smiley, 193.

277 Ibid, 197.

278 Ibid, Ibid.

279 Ibid, 204.

280 Alex Wall. *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City* (Barcelona, 2005), 92.

281 Smiley, 25.

282 Longstreth, 275-276. Kenneth MacDonald's 1923-34 Mercantile Arcade connecting Broadway and Spring Streets offered an "important point of departure for the enclosed regional shopping mall."

Texas, Southdale represented a far more ambitious proposition. Gruen, with the real economist Larry Smith, with whom he had first worked on the Montclair project and would continue to work with for the remainder of his career, envisioned the Southdale Center as the gathering place of planned community of 462 acres²⁸³ and as an “imaginative distillation of what makes downtowns magnetic.”²⁸⁴ Gruen’s design for Southdale was characterized by a “carnival atmosphere,”²⁸⁵ and, according to *Architectural Forum*, included “sculpture, sidewalk café[s]...newsstand walls with abstractions in glass mosaic, cigar store Indian, 42’-tall eucalyptus [with] fifty brightly plumaged little birds, a children’s carnival with real zoo.”²⁸⁶ The Southdale Center marked the critical passage of the shopping center from experimental prototype into mainstream typology.

While Gruen’s shopping centers hosted many of the traditional functions of downtown as a civic space, playing host to orchestral concerts, fashion shows, and dances, its program and tenant mix, having learned from Broadway-Crenshaw Center and others, was carefully controlled. “At first glance some people took regional shopping centers for clones of downtown with parking and pedestrian malls added, but this was a nearsighted view,” state Frieden and Sagalyn in *Downtown Inc.* “A closer look showed that developers had lifted the most productive types of stores from downtown—those selling brand-name clothing, jewelry, shoes, cards and gifts, candy, and specialty food items...and passed over the furniture stores, five-and-dime variety stores, key shops, liquor shops, used-book stores, bargain basements, second-hand stores, pawnshops, [and] trinket places.”²⁸⁷ Gruen and his clients did not see Southdale as being in direct competition with downtown. Instead, they saw it “as a symbol of Minneapolis’ economic expansion and not its decentralization.”²⁸⁸ In fact, Gruen saw Southdale as “fight[ing] against the commercial slum,”²⁸⁹ in reference to ubiquitous auto-oriented strip development along roads emanating from the center. Yet the environment of the peripheral shopping mall suggested other forces at work. The shopping center sought “a secure, predictable space in which white suburban men and women could feel part of a larger civic world.”²⁹⁰ As Lizabeth Cohen states in her article “From Town Center to Shopping Center,” “When developers and store owners set

283 Wall, 94.

284 “A Breakthrough for Two-level Shopping Centers.” *Architectural Forum* 105, Dec. 1956, 82.

285 Hardwick, 149.

286 Ibid, 148. “A Break-Through for Two-Level Shopping Centers: Two Level Southdale,” *Architectural Forum* (December 1956).

287 Frieden and Sagalyn, 65.

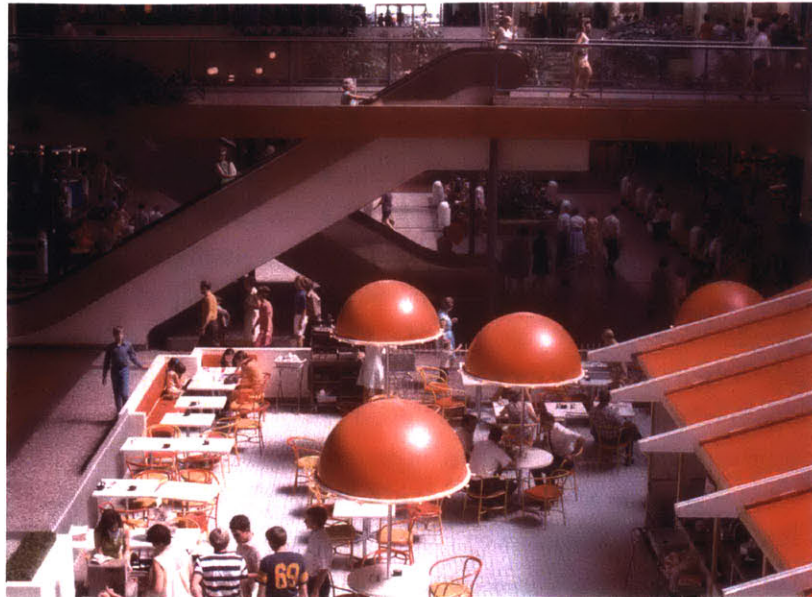
288 Hardwick, 152.

289 Ibid, 154.

290 Ibid, 152.

2.18

Southdale Shopping Center,
Edina, Minnesota, 1969.
Credit: G.E. Kidder Smith Image
Collection, MIT Libraries



out to make the shopping center a more perfect downtown, they aimed to exclude from this public space unwanted urban groups such as vagrants, prostitutes, racial minorities, and poor people. Market segmentation became the guiding principle of this mix of commercial and civic activity, as the shopping center sought perhaps contradictorily to legitimize itself as a true community center and to define that community in exclusionary socioeconomic and racial terms.”²⁹¹

Later in his career, after Gruen, at least rhetorically, shifted from creating community centers in the suburbs to saving downtowns, he would reflect less positively on his suburban work, angered and disappointed at the perversion of his shopping center ideas at the hands of greedy developers. In later speeches, he referred to the catastrophe of the star “Motorius,” a planet not unlike our own on which human life had gone extinct after expressways covered 92 percent of land area. “Before the final catastrophe on the star Motorius occurred...” he said, “the inhabitants of the star Motorius had to demolish all their buildings in order to have enough space for highways. They therefore lived, slept, and procreated in their machines.”²⁹²

CIAM 8 and the Heart of the City

Though the regional shopping center provided one important precedent for the pedestrian mall, recent developments in new town planning and urban

291 Cohen, Lizabeth. “From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America.” *The American Historical Review* 101.4 (1996): 1059.

292 Victor Gruen. *The Heart of our Cities: The Urban Crisis: Diagnosis And Cure* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 68.

redevelopment in Europe provided equal inspiration. While planners in the United States had long referred to European precedents and practices in architecture and urban planning, the 1940s witnessed a sustained dialogue and exchange between European and American practitioners that had a significant impact on professional practice in the 1950s and 1960s. Figures like Walter Gropius, Victor Gruen, and Oscar Stonorov, who has left or fled Europe for the United States in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, brought European ideals of modernism and notions of urbanity with them.

After World War II, CIAM's "Taylorized" approach gave way to more humanistic objectives, based on "satisfy[ing] man's emotional and material needs and stimulat[ing] his spiritual growth."²⁹³ At its 1951 meeting in Great Briatin, *CIAM 8: The Heart of the City*, the stronghold of avant-garde modernism shifted its focus towards "the core," justified by the need to create "a special physical environment devoted to expressing [a] sense of community."²⁹⁴ Led by the Spanish architect Jose Luis Sert and the Modern Architectural Research Group (MARS Group) based in Britain, where the conference was held, CIAM's embrace of the core reflected ongoing activity in town center developments that had been active since in the mid-1940s.²⁹⁵ The conference report referred directly to a recent project in the new town of Stevenage in Great Britain, as well as recent projects in Sweden. The topic also built upon Sert's 1944 essay "The Human Scale in City Planning," in which he specifically recommended pedestrianization as a part of urban revitalization.²⁹⁶ While Walter Gropius had pushed for the involvement of a larger cohort of planners, urbanists, and architects from the United States at the time (and many were invited),²⁹⁷ the CIAM group remained composed of mostly European figures.²⁹⁸ The key themes of the 1951 conference, including a discussion of "'the core' and a pedestrian, precinct-based urbanism"²⁹⁹ signified an evolution of the groups' ideas since the Athens Charter of 1933. The printed book recording the conference proceedings included photographs of lively public spaces, such as Venice's Saint Mark's and Rockefeller Center,³⁰⁰ as well as recent proposals for Stevenage in Great Britain and Tumaco, Colombia by CIAM members.³⁰¹

Postwar Pedestrianization: Rotterdam's Lijnbaan and Stevenage New Town

293 Mumford, 172.

294 Ibid, 206.

295 Ibid, 201.

296 Ibid, 203.

297 Victor Gruen and other shopping center architects were not included in this prospective invitation list.

298 Mumford, 204.

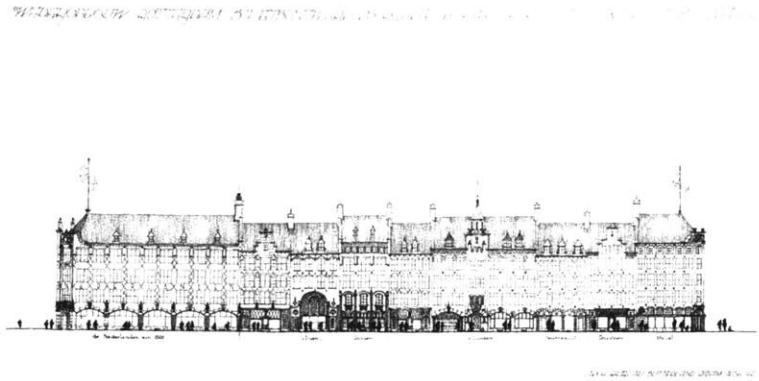
299 Smiley, 232.

300 Ibid, 232.

301 Ibid, 234. David Smiley notes the remarkable similarities in "site planning, massing, connection to existing or new city fabric, [and] program organization" with Gruen's later 1956 Plan for Fort Worth, which will be the focus of Chapter 3.

2.19

Elevation, Westewagenstraat Block; Witteveen Plan for the reconstruction of Rotterdam, 1942. Credit: Rotterdam City Archives



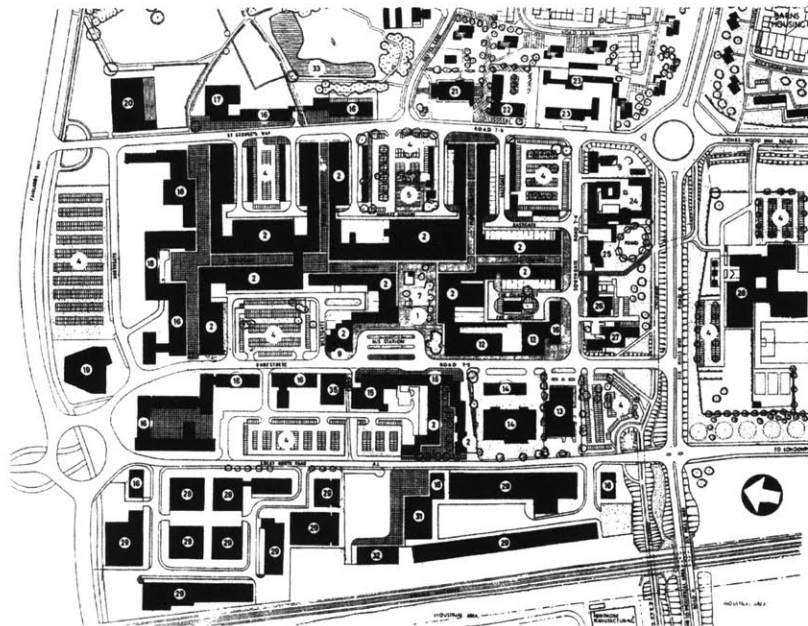
2.20

Lijnbaan, Rotterdam, Netherlands. Completed 1955. Architects: Jo van der Broek and Jaap Bakema.



2.21

Town Centre, Stevenage. Leonard G. Vincent. "The Town Centre, Stevenage." Town Planning Review 31.2 (1960).



In the early 1950s, several projects in Europe proved highly influential as precedents for both postwar downtown revitalization and peripheral shopping center design in the United States. Foremost among these was the Lijnbaan Shopping Street (begun in 1953 and completed in 1955), which was designed by two leading Dutch architects and CIAM members J.H. van den Broek and Jaap Bakema for the center of Rotterdam destroyed during World War II. At the beginning of the war, Rotterdam had witnessed the destruction of over 11,000 buildings, almost 25,000 housing units, 2,400 shops, and other businesses and institutions at the hands of Nazi bombers invading the Netherlands.³⁰² Following the city's destruction, city officials moved quickly to draw up plans for a reconstruction, fearing that the Nazis might seize the rebuilding process. The first plan, the Witteveen reconstruction plan, named after its author, the city architect Willem Geritt Witteveen in 1941, closely mimicked the prewar configuration of the city, using traditional Dutch motifs and architectural styles. Though the plan was adopted in 1941, the war delayed its implementation and opened up the window for criticism by the Dutch modernist architects.³⁰³ Business leaders of the Club Rotterdam and progressive architects of the Opbouw, a sub-group of Dutch CIAM members and modern architects, including Jaap Bakema, fought for a new direction. After Witteveen went briefly on sick leave, Bakema convinced his deputy Cornelis van Traa to revise the plan, an effort that resulted in the revised "Basic Plan" of 1944.

The Basic Plan for Rotterdam reflected the impulse towards modernization, including an immense traffic circle at a major intersection crossing of the Maas River, new tunnels, and a complete rethinking of the central core. At the center of the city would be a completely different kind of shopping district, composed of streamlined, modern buildings and pedestrianized core.

When completed in 1955, the Lijnbaan shopping area consisted of two parallel streets in the heart of central Rotterdam that were devastated by bombing. The redesign was characterized by parallel rows of two to three story buildings, which together framed a central pedestrian spine. Small shopkeepers lined the main avenue and larger department stores sat at the ends. Delivery facilities were provided at the rear to service the new shopping structures. Arcades framed shopping displays and provided protection from the weather.³⁰⁴

302 Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo. *The Rediscovery of the Pedestrian: 12 European cities*. (Department of Housing and Urban Development, US Government Printing Office, 1977), 33.

303 "Plan Witteveen, the First Reconstruction Plan," Platform Wederopbouw Rotterdam. Accessed March 2016.

304 Jo van der Broek and Jaap Bakema. "The Lijnbaan at Rotterdam." *Town Planning Review* 27.1 (1956), 25.

Two other influential precedents in the early 1950s came from Great Britain—the rebuilt center of Coventry, England, which was devastated in the war, and the new town of Stevenage, designed by Gordon Stephenson in 1950. Both provided American architects and planners with viable prototypes for downtowns and shopping centers alike. The site plan of Stevenage, designed in 1950, for instance, bore certain remarkable similarities to George Nelson’s 194X proposal for Syracuse, New York. The center at Stevenage, designed for a population of 80,000, consisted of two major pedestrian streets bisecting one another with a town square at the crossing point. Of the final scheme, Leonard Vincent wrote in 1960: “The various pedestrian ways and squares are at differing levels, which adds considerably to the interest and appearance of the Centre. The intimate feeling and enclosure of the main square is achieved by siting at the change of level from the bus square a large railed platform, placed over the public conveniences, thus forming a retaining structure against the higher level of the bus square. Cafes are allowed to put their tables and umbrellas in the pedestrian ways, and thus form a useful and interesting part of the daily scene.”³⁰⁵ The complex planned for 4,000 parked cars, but had contingency space for up to 12,000 vehicles that could be built as multi-level garages beneath the parks.³⁰⁶

Westminster Regained: Introducing Gordon Cullen’s Pedestrianism

Another influence on pedestrianization emanating from Britain was Gordon’s Cullen’s 1947 “Westminster Regained” project.³⁰⁷ Cullen, a trained architect who had joined the staff of the British *Architectural Review* as an assistant art director in 1946, here produced his first “revolutionary study in pedestrianisation,” which offered a vision of transformation for the area around Parliament Square.³⁰⁸ Cullen’s studies, which were some of his first to utilize his drawing technique of “serial vision,” included visions of vibrant squares and street scenes. According to his biographer David Gosling, Cullen demonstrated an uncanny “ability to create an architecture of the Modern Movement which was entirely compatible with the Gothic, Georgian and Victorian Neo-Gothic architecture which formed the backdrop.”³⁰⁹ From the success of Westminster Regained, Cullen in 1948 further developed his imagery of a pedestrian city in a feature entitled “Legs and Wheels,” as well as a series of subsequent proposals which will be discussed in the next chapter.³¹⁰ Cullen’s studies from the era, while

305 L. G. Vincent. “The Town Centre, Stevenage.” *Town Planning Review* 31.2 (1960), 105.

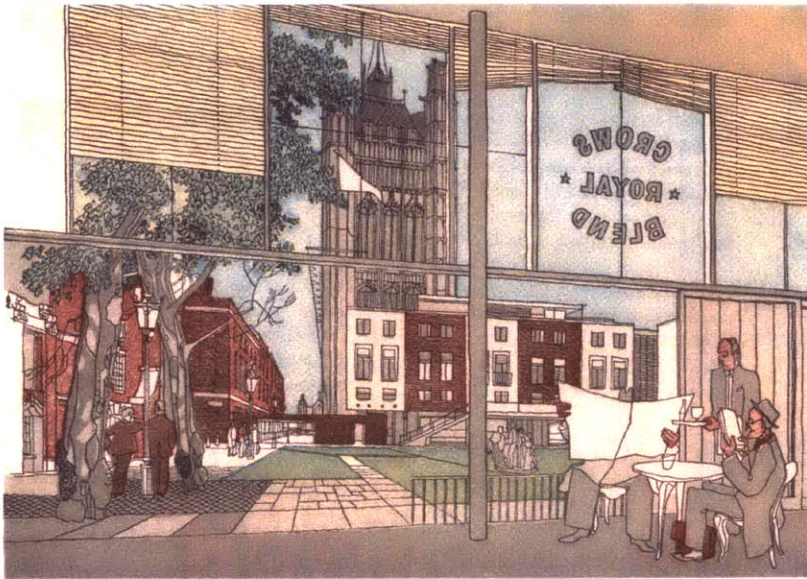
306 Vincent, 105.

307 Cullen, Gordon. “Westminster Regained.” *Architectural Review* 102 (1947): 131-4.

308 David Gosling. *Gordon Cullen: Visions of Urban Design* (Academy Editions, 1996), 24-25.

309 Gosling, *Cullen*, 25.

310 Gordon Cullen. “Legs and Wheels.” *The Architectural Review* 104 (1948), 77-80.



2.22
Cullen, Gordon. "Westminster Regained." *Architectural Review* 102 (1947): 131-4.

they constituted informal critiques of modern architecture rather than serious proposals, suggested an ideal of public life that differed from the prevailing modernism of the moment. His use of cobblestones, the deliberate inclusion of bollards and other street furniture,³¹¹ as well as his characteristically stout and disheveled scale figures "humanized" the urban scene and produced a vision of a "modern townscape" well ahead of its time.

Conclusion

While European postwar planning and reconstruction influenced the urban renewal schemes set forth in the United States from the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s, the character of these projects would express divergent tendencies towards both suburban retail decentralization and late CIAM European modernism. The ideas first harbored by George Nelson, Morris Ketchum, and others would by the mid-1950s find their first expression in the American downtowns. Yet the articulation of these ideals, the forms that they would take, and the structures that enabled them could not have been anticipated. The expression of pedestrianization in the American downtown would manifest itself far differently than either in Europe or the American suburbs. By 1956, the stage was set for Victor Gruen's groundbreaking proposal for the reimagining of the American downtown—*A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow*.

311 Gordon Cullen. *The Concise Townscape*. (London, UK: Routledge, 1961). In another article from 1949, Cullen celebrated the "valuable contribution" of outdoor advertising and depicted urban scenes with colorful, variegated advertisements chaotically affixed to cityscape of modern and historical buildings.



PART TWO



Part II: Victor Gruen and City X

Part I of this thesis investigated the history of city plans and downtowns in the United States leading up to 1956. This background served two purposes. The first was to provide a basic overview of planning trends and an evolution of planning and design ideas in the first half of the twentieth century. The second was to construct a historical framework within which to better understand the various components of the plans that will be analyzed in Part II. In contrast to Part I, Part II will focus more on primary source material, specifically the plans themselves, and will be oriented around a series of “plan readings” that use Brent Ryan’s visual theory of plan interpretation discussed in the introduction.

Part II consists of two chapters. Chapter Three analyzes Victor Gruen’s seminal 1956 plan, *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow*, a paradigm shift in urban planning and design which catalyzed the central business district plans of the mid-1950s. Chapter Four looks at Gruen’s 1960 *Plan for the Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: the Plan and its Implementation*, which resulted in the construction of Fresno’s Fulton Mall in 1964, based on a design by the landscape architect Garrett Eckbo.

This thesis identifies Gruen’s Fort Worth plan as a touchstone in the evolution of downtown plans, a moment in which a series of ideas discussed in Part I crystallized to an extent hitherto unimaginable. Two critical ideas emerge from the Fort Worth plan and provide a framework for this thesis. The first is the pedestrianization scheme, or the pedestrian mall, whose antecedents were discussed in Chapter 2. The discussion of the pedestrian mall will build upon the notion of pedestrianization as an expression of modernity and a response to the pressures of “motordom.” Here, Victor Gruen plays an outsized and essential role in promotion of what David Smiley called “pedestrian modern” in the 1950s and 1960s. The second area of investigation focuses on the plan document itself. The thesis interprets the plan as “an idea vessel” that can serve as a lens through which to read the history of urban renewal and downtown revitalization from 1956 to 1974.

CHAPTER THREE





MAKING A PLAN A GREATER FORT WORTH TOMORROW

Dreams are essential to a city, too, dreams
Of things to come. Yet dreams are not
enough. From dreams must come plans and
from plans must come action.

-Victor Gruen, *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow*³¹²

The Downtown Dilemma

In his seminal 1956 plan, *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow*, the Viennese architect Victor Gruen superimposed the silhouette of downtown Fort Worth on a map of Midtown Manhattan centered on Rockefeller Center. Though almost 25 years old, Rockefeller Center in the mid-1950s remained a model for how cities could transform themselves in the postwar era.³¹³ The implicit comparison between New York's Rockefeller Center and Gruen's plan for Fort Worth may seem far-fetched today, but it would have resonated strongly with urban planners, policymakers, politicians, and developers striving to revive downtowns in the mid-1950s.

Between the onset of the Depression and the end of the World War II, cities in the United States saw little to no construction in their downtowns. Few skylines changed from the late 1920s boom years through the late 1940s and early 1950s, even as the country prospered in the wake of World War II. Fort Worth, Texas, a city of close to 279,000 in 1950, was typical in this respect. Between 1920 and 1930, the city saw the construction of nine buildings over 200 feet. Over the next twenty years, however, only a single structure would reach that threshold, a tower built as part of a municipal auditorium outside of downtown.

The conditions of many downtowns had deteriorated to such

3.1

(previous page)

Plan for the Revitalization of the Core of Cincinnati (1962). Victor Gruen Associates. Credit: Crawford Westbrook Collection, MIT Libraries

3.2

(opposite)

Site Plan Detail
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow (1956). Victor Gruen Associates. Credit: Crawford Westbrook Collection, MIT Libraries

312 Victor Gruen Associates. *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow*. (Fort Worth, TX: Greater Fort Worth Planning Committee, 1956), 3.

313 Elihu Rubin. *Insuring the City: The Prudential Center and the Postwar Urban Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 19.

an extent by the mid-1950s that some actively campaigned for its abandonment. In a 1955 Round Table on “How to Rebuild Cities Downtown,” reported on in *Architectural Forum*, participants called for “a major decision [on] whether or not to carry on with the central downtown district or the metropolitan city, and how.”³¹⁴ In an article for *Urban Land* magazine from March 1956, the real estate economist Larry Smith put the problem of downtown in simple terms. “Blight is not something which has struck at central properties from the outside,” he said. “It is not induced by [a] lack of parking or other amenities. Blight in business areas is a collective inability of the property owners to meet the needs of the retailers serving the ultimate judges—the shopping public.”³¹⁵

Smith attributed the problem of downtown both to the “apathy of property owners” and to the fragmented nature of property ownership that made it “impossible to get organized.”³¹⁶ Others, meanwhile, believed that the obsolescence of downtown was rooted in the intransigent problem of congestion. A 1953 “Urban Traffic Forum” issued a prognosis of defeat despite the many experts who had come together in search of a solution. “Even with a complete system of modern freeways...our central cities will continue to be congested,” one participant announced, “unless mass transit carries a large proportion of all visitors to central business districts.”³¹⁷ Going back to the 1920s, parking and access to downtown had frustrated retailers and chambers of commerce, but as automobile ownership climbed exponentially, concern turned to crisis. Lamenting the growth of the commercial strips along the highways, one article summed up the situation as such:

“The millions of new motorists, and the thousands upon thousands of entrepreneurs who followed them out of town, were doing their own city planning. The highway, originally an instrument of communication, became everybody’s private street to do with as he pleased. There was unlimited access, unlimited zoning, unlimited fun. But in the carnival were the seeds of chaos, for the road was being used for two incompatible purposes: drive-*on* and drive-*in*, not to mention pedestrian and cross-traffic. And it was out of these roadtowns that new strip cities would grow.”³¹⁸

While many were alarmed by the blighting effect of the automobile and the decentralization of the postwar landscape, there

314 “How to Rebuild Cities Downtown: Eighteen recommendations from a Round Table of 26 representatives of every downtown activity and interest,” *Architectural Forum* 102.6 (1955), 123.

315 Larry Smith. “Commercial Real Estate Relationships—Downtown and Suburban,” *Urban Land Magazine* 15.3 (1956): 3.

316 Smith, “Commercial Real Estate,” 4.

317 “Urban Traffic Forum,” *Architectural Forum* 98.2 (1953):117.

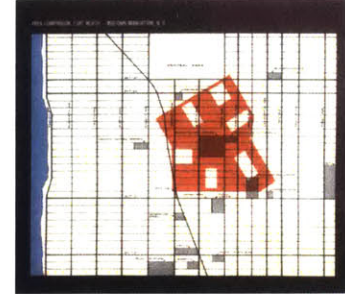
318 “What City Pattern?” *Architectural Forum* 105.3 (1956): 125.



3.3

Rockefeller Center, 1949.

Credit: John Lindsay, AP Photo



3.4

A Comparison between the core of Fort Worth and Midtown Manhattan. Victor Gruen Associates. *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* (1956)

remained little consensus as to how to resolve the downtown dilemma and few precedents for downtown's renewal in the United States. In his 1954 article "Dynamic Planning for Retail Areas," Victor Gruen posed the problem as a conflict between "dentralizers," who "regard[ed] the suburban shopping development as the cure for...the 'pestiferous growth' of the city," and the "downtowners," who saw "the regional trend as a satanic device to ruin them."³¹⁹ While Gruen rightly perceived a simmering conflict between those who had forsaken downtown for dead and the boosters and apathetic shopkeepers who sneered at competition from the suburbs, most experts at the time believed that long range planning and analysis could strike the right balance between central city and periphery. In the 1955 forum, for instance "there was not a single member who did not desire health and prosperity equally for outlying areas. Bankers and businessmen present had investments in both places and agreed with the professional men present that each has its own characteristic functions. Without a focal point, without a center, the continued functioning of outlying districts or towns was considered as improbable as the continued functioning of the limbs of a body without a heart."³²⁰

319 Victor Gruen, "Dynamic Planning for Retail Areas," *Harvard Business Review* 32.6 (1954): 53.

320 "How to Rebuild Cities Downtown," 123.

A City within a City: Learning from Rockefeller Center and the Pittsburgh Renaissance

From the passage of the Federal Housing Act of 1949 until 1956, when Congress passed the Interstate Highway Act, there emerged several important precedents for downtown planning and development that would serve as models over the ensuing decade. As noted, from its opening in 1931 through the 1950s, Rockefeller Center stood as the preeminent model for comprehensive redevelopment in the heart of downtown. The product of a group led by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Rockefeller Center consisted of nineteen buildings packed onto 17 acres in the heart of Midtown Manhattan.³²¹ Though it had been originally envisioned as the site of the Metropolitan Opera, the future of the complex was cast in doubt by the Depression and it was restaged as a corporate and retail complex anchored by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA). The Center was designed by the architect Raymond Hood in the Art Deco style and included a multi-level shopping concourse, a 3,500-seat movie palace, a 6,000-seat music hall, a sunken outdoor ice-skating rink, an extensive collection of sculpture and murals by well-known artists of the time, and a pedestrian-only interior core that limited through traffic. To service its stores and buildings, the Center had an underground loading dock that kept trucks off the street and away from pedestrians.³²² In the early 1950s, as cities began to conceive of a new vision for downtown, Rockefeller Center was what they aspired to.

The decade after the war witnessed the design and construction of several complexes that proved influential for later development schemes. These included Pittsburgh's Gateway Center, Philadelphia's Penn Center, and Boston's Back Bay Center (later to become the Prudential Center).³²³ Built by the Equitable Life Assurance Society in 1952, Pittsburgh's Gateway Center consisted of four cruciform office towers set in a verdant open space. Though some described the design as coldly functional,³²⁴ the Gateway Center demonstrated how a powerful downtown coalition could lead a downtown renaissance. Pittsburgh was one of the first cities

³²¹ Rubin, 20.

³²² This underground loading system remains an exemplary design for accommodating freight off-street in New York City. See Ann G. Morris. "The Last Mile: Developing Efficient Freight Operations for Manhattan's 11 Buildings." *Stephen L. Newman Real Estate Institute, Baruch College* 12 (2009): 13. See also, Clyde Haberman. "NYC; An Ode Conceived in Traffic" (New York Times, Mar. 7, 2001).

³²³ The Back Bay Center, later renamed the Prudential Center, was not completed until 1964. Another important project that belongs on this list is Baltimore's Charles Center, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. The Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc. was formed in 1955 and set out to redevelop the Charles Center site soon thereafter. Charles Center is not mentioned here because its design was conceived after 1956, making it an improbable precursor to Gruen's Fort Worth scheme. Denver's Mile High Center, designed by I.M. Pei and opened in 1955, also deserves note here.

³²⁴ Jane Jacobs. "Downtown is for People," in *The Exploding Metropolis*. ed. William H. Whyte, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1958), 161.

to embrace urban renewal, and pioneered both developments downtown, such as Mellon Square and the Gateway Center, as well as slum clearance efforts, with the renewal of the dense African-American Hill District neighborhood in the 1950s. The city's early successes in renewal were driven by the Allegheny Conference, a powerful coalition of downtown business interests led by the financier Richard King Mellon. The group, on which many cities would later pattern their own downtown coalitions, formed in 1944 to combat downtown deterioration and pollution. The Allegheny Conference aligned private sector resources and financing with public-sector leadership in the person of Mayor David Lawrence, setting in motion what was known as the "Pittsburgh Renaissance" of the 1950s.³²⁵ By the early 1950s, Pittsburgh was one of the only cities in the country that had undertaken any large-scale clearance efforts in its downtown and was viewed as a model of success following the Housing Act of 1949.³²⁶

Whereas the Allegheny Conference provided a model for downtown business coalitions, Philadelphia's Penn Center project, orchestrated under Philadelphia Planning Commission Director Edmund Bacon and Mayor Joseph S. Clark, demonstrated the leadership role of city government in urban renewal. After the Pennsylvania Railroad departed its Broad Street Station for a new terminal in 1925, the opportunity opened to rethink the old station area, which had long been known as "Pennsy's old Chinese Wall"³²⁷ because it acted as a barrier to downtown's westward expansion. After the station's demolition in 1953, the project, developed by the New York-based Uris Brothers through a loan from Prudential Insurance Company, consisted of eight buildings on a 23-acre strip segmented into three rectangular blocks. Penn Center, first conceived as part of Bacon's Better Philadelphia Exhibition³²⁸ at Gimbel's Department Store in 1947, developed further over the ensuing years and set an important precedent for future downtown redevelopments.

Like Penn Center, Boston's Back Bay Center, proposed by the developer Roger Stevens in 1953, envisioned the renewal of a triangular parcel of land formerly occupied by the Boston & Albany railroad yards and adjacent to Boston's "midtown" financial district.³²⁹ Stevens saw the center "as a stopgap to the suburbanization of the city's economic functions" and felt that the development "was strategically placed to

325 Frieden et al., 18.

326 Civic Progress, Inc. in St. Louis is also frequently mentioned as a pioneer of the downtown business association coming together to make a concerted effort to resolve downtown deterioration.

327 Frank Fogarty, "The Earning Power of Plazas," *Architectural Forum* 108.1 (1958): 108.

328 *The Better Philadelphia Exhibition: What City Planning Means to You* (Philadelphia, PA: City Planning Commission, 1947).

329 Rubin, 149.

3.5

The Back Bay Center Proposal, 1953
The Boston Center Architects with
Roger Stevens. Credit: Harvard Fine
Arts Library, Digital Images & Slides
Collection



‘intercept’ downtown traffic.”³³⁰ Designed by a distinguished group of local thought leaders in architecture and urbanization known as the Boston Center Architects, including then-chair of the Architecture Department at Harvard Walter Gropius; members of his firm, The Architects Collaborative (TAC); Pietro Belluschi, then-Dean of Architecture at MIT; architects Carl Koch and Hugh Stubbins; traffic consultant Wilbur Smith; economic consultant Kenneth Welch; and Walter Bogner of the Boston Center Architects, the Back Bay Center reflected the basic tenets of CIAM 8’s *Heart of the City*. The complex consisted of ring road leading directly into a 5000-car garage; a “six-sided, lozenge-shaped office tower; a department store; a shopping area; office buildings; a motel; and “saucer-shaped” convention hall.³³¹ Most important, the project separated pedestrians and automobiles, including the construction of an enclosed multi-level shopping mall with a glass roof.

In his book *Insuring the City: The Prudential Center and the Postwar Urban Landscape* (2012), Elihu Rubin describes the Back Bay Center proposal as “a motor age update on the large-scale commercial project coordinated with transport facilities.”³³² Team member Walter Bogner called it a “cure for the ailing heart of Boston,”³³³ while *Architectural Forum* said that the plan added “big city excitement and power to the rural-shopping center concept by building not just a castle of stores...

330 Rubin, 168-169. This proved to be a point of contention, since Massachusetts Turnpike Authority Chairman sought to run the “Pike” directly into Boston along the right of way of the Boston & Albany. The eventual compromise was to deck over the turnpike at the Prudential Center, though this solution was far from a sure thing when Stevens submitted his proposal.

331 Ibid, 170.

332 Ibid, 168.

333 Ibid, 169.

but also office buildings, a convention hall, and a 750-room hotel.”³³⁴ While modeled to an extent on Rockefeller Center, the Back Bay Center introduced several enhancements upon that scheme, including the ring road proposed by the transportation consultant Wilbur Smith as well as the enclosed multi-level shopping promenade meant to “give back to the pedestrian his right of way.”³³⁵

In spite of the accolades earned by the proposal, including an award in 1954 from *Progressive Architecture* magazine, Roger Stevens revoked his bid after failing to earn a tax concession for the project from the city of Boston in 1955. When Prudential Insurance Company took on the site in 1955 as part of their Regional Home Office Program,³³⁶ the Boston Center Architects were initially consulted, but were eventually replaced by Charles Luckman,³³⁷ a Lever Soap-executive turned architect whose financial acumen appealed to businessmen and won him many commissions in the 1950s and 1960s despite weak critical reviews. Though Luckman was originally hired onto the project in 1956, the Prudential Center itself would not be completed until 1964.

Chicago's Perimeter Plan and Gruen's Appleton Scheme

In a 1954 article for the *Harvard Business Review*, “Dynamic Planning for Retail Areas,” Victor Gruen referred to both Penn Center and the proposed Back Bay Center in laying out a “corrective”³³⁸ for the problems of downtown shopping. In the article, he set forth the basic principles that would govern his forthcoming Fort Worth scheme and the downtown projects that he would spearhead over the coming decade. In describing his tonic for tired downtowns, Gruen also made reference to a plan that his firm had drawn up in 1953 for the small city of Appleton, Wisconsin, two years prior to the release of Fort Worth.

Gruen's Appleton plan built upon and reflected two prior efforts, to which Gruen referred to directly in his article. The first was Morris Ketchum's 1946 plan for the central business district of Rye, New York and discussed in Chapter 2.³³⁹ The second was the “Perimeter Plan” by the

334 “A Cavity in Boston—to be Filled with Six Ideas,” *Architectural Forum* 99 (November 1953): 103.

335 Rubin, 171, quoting Walter Gropius.

336 See Rubin, 39-41 for an explanation and history of the Prudential's Regional Home Office Program. In contrast to many of its competitors, in the 1940s and 1950s, the Prudential Insurance Company remained committed to and aligned with downtowns. Between 1948 and 1965, Prudential's Regional Home Office Program set out to build regional headquarters in cities including Boston, Chicago, Newark, Minneapolis, Houston, and Los Angeles. As a result, several of the first skyscrapers built in the postwar downtowns of American cities are Prudential buildings.

337 Luckman won the commission from Prudential while still partners with the architect William Pereira. See Rubin, 172-179.

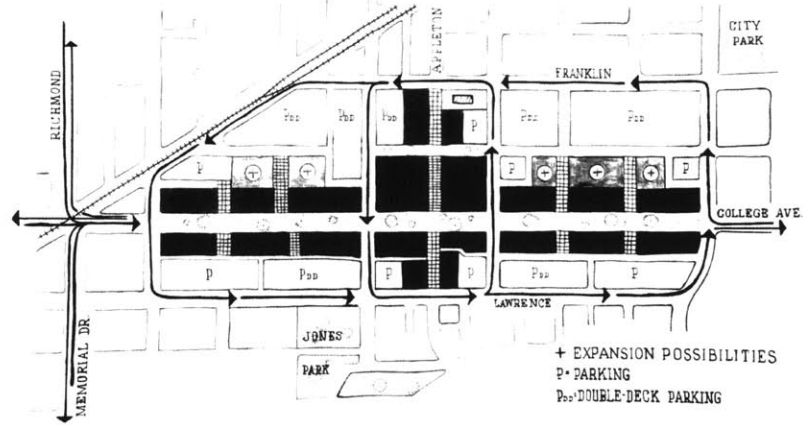
338 Gruen, “Dynamic Planning,” 55.

339 Ibid, 58.

3.6

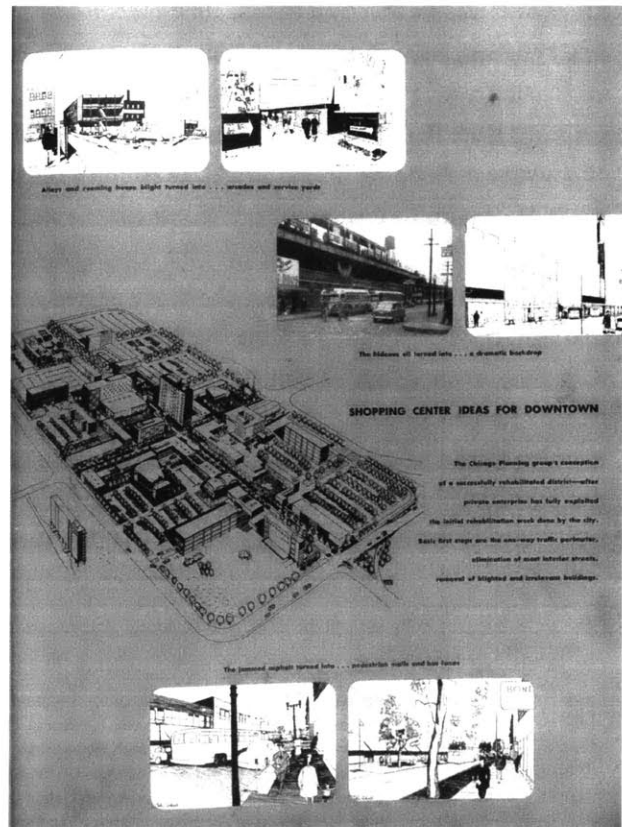
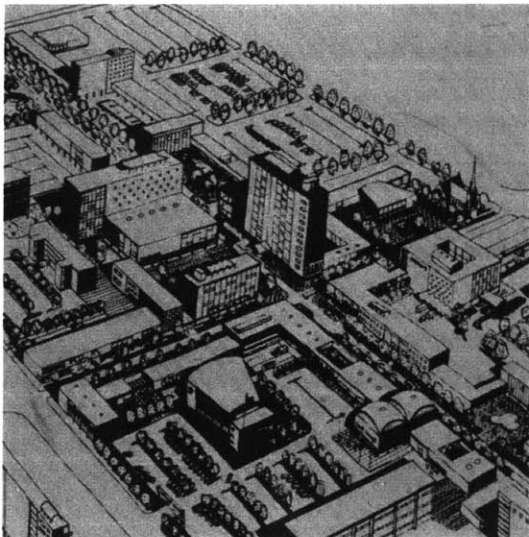
Site Plan, Downtown Appleton...
 Its Future (1953); Victor Gruen
 Associates.
 Credit: Crawford Westbrook
 Collection, MIT Libraries

A BASIC SCHEME



3.7, 3.8

The Perimeter Plan, Chicago Plan
 Commission; 69th and Halstead,
 1953. Credit: "New Thinking on
 Shopping Centers." Architectural
 Forum 98, March 1953.



Chicago Plan Commission in 1953. A March 1953 article in *Architectural Forum* called “New Thinking on Shopping Centers” published Chicago’s Perimeter Plan alongside Gruen’s newly proposed Southdale project in for suburban Minneapolis. The plan offered a solution for eight of Chicago’s “big, mature shopping districts,”³⁴⁰ which had been losing business to new shopping centers.³⁴¹ The Perimeter Plan used the 63rd-Halsted business section of Chicago, also known as Englewood Circle, as a prototype and offered a ten-point plan for the district’s renewal:

1. Construct a one-way traffic perimeter around the district, using existing streets as far as possible.
2. Route all private vehicles into the traffic perimeter.
3. Route mass-transit vehicles through the center, either at grade or by subway.
4. Acquire and clear all nonconforming (as residential) buildings and blighted structures inside the perimeter.
5. Eliminate local streets inside the perimeter.
6. Provide parking and service facilities on cleared land.
7. Narrow the streets through the heart of the center to one lane for public transportation (with cutouts for loading points) and combine the land saved with existing sidewalks to create pedestrian malls.
8. Remodel the rear of commercial buildings for greater service efficiency and to give attractive facades towards parking lots.
9. Plan simple, coordinated architectural treatments as a guide to the kind of changes pictured opposite.
10. Spark a cooperative organization of interests inside the perimeter to coordinate maintenance and continued private improvements.³⁴²

As articulated in the article, the Chicago Plan demonstrated that “the big centers are ready to pay back their debt to Main Street”³⁴³ and apply some of the lessons learned in the suburban shopping centers to the revitalization of older districts. Accompanying the plan were a number of renderings, including a before-after series showing the conversion of “alleys and rooming house blight” into “arcades and service yards,”³⁴⁴ adapting the dual entrance “Janus” scheme already pioneered in outlying shopping centers like the Broadway-Crenshaw Center in Los Angeles. An aerial perspective drawing of the proposal directly echoed both the Westchester Business Center and George Nelson’s 1943 proposal for Syracuse. The plan included two intersecting spines lined by rows of modern buildings similar

340 “New Thinking on Shopping Centers,” *Architectural Forum* 98, March 1953, 122.

341 Shirley Lowry. “Vision ‘Dream’ Center by 1956 at 63d-Halsted: Plan to Clear Area for Englewood Circle,” *The Chicago Tribune*, April 8, 1954, 4.

342 “New Thinking on Shopping Centers,” *Architectural Forum* 98, March 1953, 122

343 Ibid, Ibid.

344 Ibid, 123.

REDEVELOPED DOWNTOWN 1960



COLLEGE AVE. CONVERTED TO A LANDSCAPED PEDESTRIAN MALL - COVERED WALKS PROVIDE WEATHER PROTECTION AND ARCHITECTURAL UNITY.



3.9, 3.10

(right and opposite)

Downtown Appleton...Its Future

(1953); Victor Gruen Associates.

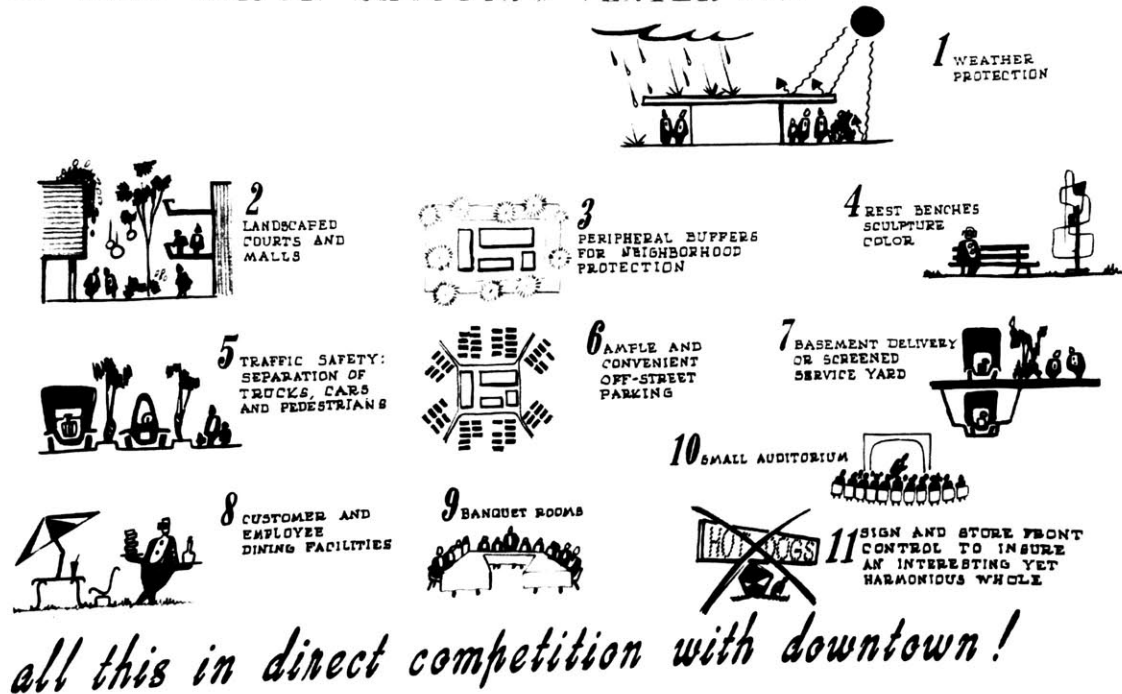
Credit: Crawford Westbrook

Collection, MIT Libraries

to those of the Lijnbaan in Rotterdam. Clusters of slim towers and cultural institutions studded the main corridor. A one-way arterial perimeter road encircled the shopping area and fed into a series of large parking areas along the outer blocks. The Perimeter Plan, though published by the Chicago Plan Commission, included among its contributors Frederick T. Aschman and George F. Barton, who were founders of the planning and traffic consultancy Barton-Aschman Associates. Barton-Aschman Associates would eventually go on to develop the Nicollet Mall proposal for downtown Minneapolis, a scheme that realized the transit mall idea first proposed in the Chicago Plan of 1953.

Gruen's Appleton scheme drew directly upon the Chicago Perimeter Plan and gave him an opportunity to adapt his experience in the design of suburban shopping centers to a struggling downtown. As his first foray into large-scale planning for downtown retail, the plan foreshadowed his later work in small and mid-sized cities around the country. After analyzing Appleton's potential population growth, parking needs, building conditions, and land use, Gruen proposed a set of design solutions almost identical to those proposed for Englewood Circle.

IN THIS MAJOR SHOPPING CENTER



1. Provide a one-way perimeter traffic artery around the business district, utilizing existing streets as far as possible.
2. Clear all non-conforming (such as residential) and obsolete buildings situated within this perimeter.
3. Create a series of superblocks within the perimeter by closing all but two or three local streets.
4. Use cleared land to provide off-street parking facilities and fringe parking for all-day visits.
5. Create a landscaped pedestrian mall from certain closed streets to provide a pleasant and safe atmosphere for shoppers.
6. Provide space within the perimeter for expansion.³⁴⁵

Among the crucial differences between the two proposals was the creation of traffic-free as opposed to a transit-only main street and Gruen's explicit provisions in the plan for multi-level parking structures, which would become a hallmark of his later work.

At the end of his article in the *Harvard Business Review*, Gruen acknowledged not only the potential to remake downtown, but also the risk of unproductive competition between peripheral shopping districts

³⁴⁵ Gruen, "Dynamic Planning," 59.

and central business districts. He sharply critiqued the “decentralizers,” theorists including the architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who embraced a suburban vision at the expense of downtown.³⁴⁶ Gruen instead cited Jose Luis Sert’s call for “recentralization” and a renewed focus on the urban core.³⁴⁷ In reference to Appleton, he exercised caution. “If a major shopping center were built near the city,” he warned, “it would attract people not only from the city itself but also from the surrounding towns, thus draining the whole trade area and making the downtown sooner or later a ghost town.”³⁴⁸ Going even further, Gruen decried how ineffective zoning had permitted “honky-tonk strips of stores duplicating and often triplicating their services” along the highways leading from town.³⁴⁹ At the end of his article, speaking directly to an audience of business leaders and executives, he made his call to arms.

“There will be those who feel ‘private enterprise can lick it,’ and those who counter with ‘it’s the city’s job.’ There will be municipal and public apathy. There is clearly, however, a democratic responsibility for the condition of our urban environment, an environment which is today ‘a travesty of the productive genius and creative energy of America.’ The time has come for action on a broad scale: slum clearance, creation of green areas within our city cores, provision of parking areas, improvement of traffic arteries, and enrichment of our social, cultural, and civic life. Management must accept its responsibility, for hanging perilously in the balance are the city’s welfare and prosperity and the health of our economy.”³⁵⁰

Gruen’s decision to shift part of his practice from shopping centers to the deteriorating urban cores of American cities was likely inspired by several phenomena. First was the publication in 1952 of *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanization of Urban Life*, edited by the English planner Jacqueline Tyrwhitt, the Italian architect Ernesto Rogers, and Sert, which assured him of CIAM’s rhetorical shift towards “recentralization” and the core. Gruen ascribed to late CIAM ideals and was an admirer of Jose Luis Sert, the Spanish architect and urban designer. As a vigorous self-promoter as well as a businessman, Gruen tried his best to stay at the forefront, and early proposals like Back Bay Center surely provided him with evidence that his practice might be able to capitalize on the anxiety of downtown business coalitions as much as it could the suburban shoppers lacking in community life and retail options. Lastly, Gruen, like many of his contemporaries, ascribed to the notion of an essential

346 Wright had been critical of Gruen’s designs for Northland and Southdale, claiming that Gruen had brought downtown to the suburbs, but left out all of its charms.

347 Gruen, “Dynamic Planning,” 57.

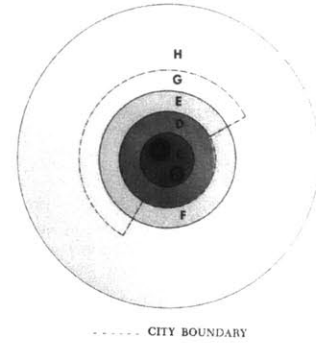
348 Ibid, 59.

349 Ibid, 55.

350 Ibid, 62.

“interdependence” between the core and periphery.

In his later writing about the structure of cities, including *The Heart of our Cities: The Urban Crisis: Diagnosis and Cure* (1964), Gruen compared the city to “a metropolitan organism in which cells, each one consisting of a nucleus and protoplasm, are combined into clusterizations to form specialized organs like towns, which, in turn, are meaningfully grouped together to form cities, and finally, in a still more highly developed organism, ‘the metropolis of tomorrow.’”³⁵¹ Gruen’s conceptualization of regional dynamics drew upon both the Garden City tradition of Ebenezer Howard³⁵² as well as the concentric zonal model developed by Homer Hoyt and other economists in the late 1930s.³⁵³ He broke the metropolitan region into eight zones, including the metropolitan core; the secondary core; the core frame; the core fringe; the urbanized area within city boundaries; the urbanized area outside city boundaries; the suburbanized area within city boundaries; and the metropolitan region itself.³⁵⁴ His downtown practice zeroed in on “the metropolitan core,”³⁵⁵ which he defined as “the most highly urbanized area, which ideally should contain a complete range of the highest productive uses and most significant urban functions not only in field of business and civic administration, but also in cultural, recreational, social and spiritual activities, and residential quarters of high quality and density.”³⁵⁶ He preferred the term ‘core’ as an alternative to ‘central business district,’ which he found misleading and undesirable (for it excluded the potential for residential), and to ‘downtown,’ which he found confusing because of its confusing geographical relationship to uptown or midtown districts.³⁵⁷



Schematic diagram of typical metropolitan region:
 A. The Metropolitan Core
 B. The Secondary Core
 C. The Core Frame
 D. The Core Fringe
 E. The Urbanized Area Within City Boundaries
 F. The Urbanized Area Outside City Boundaries
 G. The Suburbanized Area Within City Boundaries
 H. The Metropolitan Region

3.11 Metropolitan Structure Victor Gruen *The Heart of Our Cities* (1964)

The Origins of A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow

While Victor Gruen’s 1953 scheme for Appleton, Wisconsin offered the initial blueprint for his downtown revitalization strategy, it lacked the force of vision that would characterize his next act. Rendered using cartoon infographics and crude perspectives, the Appleton plan proposed something closer to Nelson’s Syracuse scheme or Ketchum’s Rye Plan than big renewal projects like Penn Center or the Back Bay Center. Nonetheless, Gruen’s article in the *Harvard Business Review* proved compelling enough

351 Gruen, *Heart of Our Cities*, 271-272.

352 Ibid., 284-285.

353 Ibid., 46.

354 Ibid., 46.

355 Fresno is one example of a plan where Gruen deviated from this framework. Here, he made a plan for the Core-Frame, the Core, and the main shopping corridor. It may be argued that Gruen’s metropolitan core really consisted of nine categories, with his main pedestrian mall or enclosed mall as the ninth. Rochester’s Midtown Plaza serves as good expression of this point.

356 Gruen, *Heart of Our Cities*, 47.

357 It is worth noting, in support of Gruen’s argument, that Petula Clark’s 1965 hit song “Downtown” was actually inspired by Midtown Manhattan.

that the President of the Texas Electric Company, J.B. Thomas, called Gruen's office in Los Angeles directly to enlist him in planning the future of Fort Worth.

J.B. Thomas, described as a "tall, trampy-looking sort of fellow" and "a yard man" with "a lumberjack's shirt and greasy khakis,"³⁵⁸ expressed concern about the future of Fort Worth and foresaw that a declining downtown could ultimately hurt his own business. "I'm a businessman, and my business is supplying electricity," declared Thomas. "If the city grows, my business grows."³⁵⁹ Thomas was the kind of dollar and cents businessman that George B. Ford imagined as his ideal client in the early 1900s—someone who could see the value of planning in economic terms, based on anticipating future development and boosting downtown revenues for his own company. After listening to Gruen's theatrical pitch, J.B. Thomas hired Victor Gruen Associates to complete a "metropolitan survey" of Fort Worth.³⁶⁰

Fort Worth, like many cities by the 1950s, was experiencing accelerated "horizontal growth"³⁶¹ as well as a relative decline in its downtown retail environment. The city had experienced a wartime production boom with the opening of a Convair plant to build military planes during World War II. This diversified industrial base, which had until then been based on the livestock industry and oil extraction, drove a population boom. Despite regional growth, population studies between 1950-56 revealed that the central part of the city had actually lost 8.8% of its population in only six years, while peripheral areas more than doubled.³⁶² Moreover, Fort Worth's leading citizen, Amon G. Carter, a newspaper magnate, real estate tycoon, and "independent operator" who had played the role of "super salesman for the city"³⁶³ had died in 1955, leaving a leadership void. The metropolitan growth of both Dallas and Fort Worth into a single, interlocked region called for strong leadership and smart planning, since Dallas, as the larger city, naturally had the upper hand.³⁶⁴

Gruen embraced the Fort Worth commission with the same enthusiasm as he had Milliron's in Los Angeles and the Northland Center in Detroit, seeing it as an opportunity to put his visionary ideas into

358 Dick Johnson. "Texas Newsmaker. J.B. Thomas: West Texas Seer," *The Dallas Morning News*, March 18, 1956.

359 J.B. Thomas as quoted in "How the Plan Got its Start," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 11, 1956. See Hardwick, 175.

360 Hardwick, 166.

361 Robert Harris Talbert. *Cawtown--Metropolis*. (Fort Worth, TX: Leo Potishman Foundation, Texas Christian University, 1956), 187.

362 Talbert, 112.

363 Ibid, 15.

364 Ibid, 265-66.

practice and to develop a prototype for downtowns that could rival the genius of his suburban shopping malls. The ultimate self-promoter, he saw the Fort Worth plan not only as an opportunity to apply his ideas to a specific city, but to develop a model that could be applied to cities across the country. Before the official release of the plan, Gruen even began referring to a “City X” in presentations and articles. At the Aspen Design Conference in 1955, he presented an anonymous project for a “remade downtown for a city of five hundred thousand, resplendent with courts and malls, sculpture and fountains, stores and parking.”³⁶⁵ The staged pre-release of the Fort Worth Plan illustrated Gruen’s public relations savvy.³⁶⁶ The plan was featured in *Businessweek* and other national newspapers and helped to generate excitement about Gruen and his visionary proposals even as disembodied from Fort Worth itself.³⁶⁷ In so doing, Gruen was able to use the Fort Worth scheme as both a blueprint that could be tailored to any American city as well as a specific proposal that could serve as a proving ground for his ideas.

After flying to Los Angeles to see the final proposal in person, J.B. Thomas endorsed the plan and made arrangements for its public release. On Saturday, March 10, 1956, Thomas introduced Victor Gruen and his partner, the Italian engineer Edgardo Contini onto the stage at the Fort Worth Club, where the two presented the plan with “the pomp, drama, and fanfare of a Broadway production.”³⁶⁸ Its reception in the press was immediate, with coverage in major magazines and newspapers, including *Time*, *Businessweek*, *Newsweek*, and the *New Yorker*. News of the plan spread quickly and its most iconic images, an aerial before-after of the city’s remade core and an eye level perspective of the mall with an elevated walkway running overhead, circulated widely. One caption in an article on the plan in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* bore the caption “The Euclid Avenue of Fort Worth,” as if to reinforce the plan’s posture as an adaptable template.³⁶⁹ Even Dallas acknowledged that its neighbor had finally done well, admitting that “the example of Fort Worth is at once instructive and inspiring. We have a neighbor worthy in its dreaming to match the best that we can dream of [on] our own. And in both cities, great dreams are blossoming out in concrete and steel and stone.”³⁷⁰

365 Hardwick, 167.

366 Ibid, 168.

367 Ibid, 168.

368 Ibid, 170. Quoting “City Leaders Throw Support; Plan for ‘City of Tomorrow’ Outlined to Civic Leaders,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 11, 1956.

369 “Fort Worth Eyes Plan to Remake Downtown Area; Seeks to Curb its Car Woe,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 22, 1956.

370 “Fort Worth’s Plans Boldly Drawn,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1956.

The Advent of the Central Business District Plan

As both a plan as well as a proposal for the core, *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* broke with convention. Compared with the prosaic comprehensive plans published by Harland Bartholomew or Ladislav Segoe, Gruen's oversized 35-page report, which was chock full of colorful illustrations, imaginative renderings, and a layout more befitting of a movie poster than a public document, redefined the essential character of the city plan itself. While Fort Worth had previously had plans drawn up by George Kessler (1909), Harland Bartholomew (1927, Streets Plan), and Hare & Hare (1930, Parks System Plan), none had focused on the central business district alone.³⁷¹ Indeed, Fort Worth both participated in and seems to have greatly accelerated an interest in the production of Central Business District plans in the mid-1950s. In a review of "recent studies of Central Business Districts" in 1961, Clyde E. Browning observed the sudden emergence of the CBD plan. "A decade ago relatively little mention was made of central business districts in the popular, planning, or scholarly literature. The rush to the suburbs and the rise of the planned shopping centers preempted popular, professional, and public concern. Today the emphasis has undergone a radical transformation. One of the hottest topics in urban research revolves around the problems and prospects of central business district. Indeed, the topic has become a virtual fad."³⁷²

A bibliography of 662 Central Business District texts prepared by University of Illinois City Planning Department Librarian Mary Vance in 1959 corroborated Browning.³⁷³ In the partial list of city plans included in Vance's bibliography, the year 1956 represented a definite turning point. Before 1956, only seven cities on the list—White Plains, San Francisco, Saint Paul, Princeton, Bethesda, Philadelphia, and Wilmington³⁷⁴—had produced plans for their "central business districts." A cursory examination of that subset suggests that most were either sub-area reports focused on a small area rather than the entire downtown (as in the case of San Francisco) or internal studies not intended for widespread public viewing (as in the Philadelphia 1951 Central District Study). Indeed, before 1956, the dominant mode of planning for the central area remained *civic center*

371 I am referring to detail in the specificity of the physical proposal, rather than in the sense of data and other projections that would certainly have been in prior reports.

372 Clyde E. Browning, "Recent Studies of Central Business Districts," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 27.1 (1961): 82.

373 A full account of the literature on Central Business Districts was made by Mary Vance of the Illinois City Planning Department Library in the 1959. This included 662 titles. See Mary Vance, *Central Business Districts*, Exchange Bibliography 12, Committee of Planning Librarians, 6318 Thornhill Drive, Oakland 11, California, November 1959. Shirley Weiss also published a sterling bibliography on Downtown Malls in 1964. See Shirley F. Weiss "The Downtown Mall Experiment," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 30.1 (1964): 66-73.

374 Notably, Vance does not include Gruen's plan for Appleton, but includes the Ketchum Rye study from 1946.

plans and parking studies. Chicago, Albuquerque, Austin, Modesto, Norfolk, and Dayton all undertook civic center plans between 1945 and 1955. Meanwhile, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, an increasing number of cities undertook parking studies for the central area, a reflection of increasing anxiety about the viability of downtown retail. Between 1956 and 1959, Baltimore, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Detroit, Indianapolis, Madison, Miami, Chicago, New Brunswick, Seattle, and Norfolk, to name a few, all produced CBD plans. While some of these plans, such as those of Detroit and Cincinnati, appear to have been part of planning studies initiated before the Gruen plan was published, others were clearly inspired by it. While it would be inaccurate to suggest that Gruen's Fort Worth plan was the first of this type, there is little doubt that it perfected it and provided the basic model for other cities to follow after 1956. The Gruen plan, in bringing together the shopping center, the downtown mixed-use complex (i.e. Back Bay Center), and the European new town center, established a new paradigm which cities across the United States would thereafter strive to emulate.³⁷⁵

A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow: Factual Reading

To understand what made the Gruen Plan unique and extraordinary in March 1956 requires a detailed exposition and analysis of the plan itself. This reading has been segmented into a series of analyses, including that of the illustrated content of the plan, its layout and graphic design, and its overall narrative.

A Tripartite Narrative

Plans from the mid-1940s through the mid-1950s tended to follow the basic template originally set forth by George B. Ford and E.P. Goodrich in 1914 and perfected by Harland Bartholomew, Ladislav Segoe, and others from the 1920s through the early 1950s.³⁷⁶ Harland Bartholomew's *Comprehensive City Plan for Oklahoma City* (1944-1948), discussed in Chapter 1, is emblematic of this type and reflective of the extent to which the aesthetically grandiose City Beautiful Plans of the early 1900s had been subsumed by the statistical paradigm advanced by the City Practical. The Bartholomew plans, moreover, demonstrated the piecemeal nature of comprehensive planning in the 1940s, which tended to result in multiple single-theme plans for traffic, housing, parks, and civic centers.

³⁷⁵ "Thomas, Outstanding Citizen," *Fort Worth Press*, February 22, 1961. See Hardwick, 173. The article claimed that 80 cities had been directly inspired by Gruen's Plan by 1961.

³⁷⁶ I mean here that the dominant planning framework of the early postwar era followed a rational planning model established by the Technical Advisory Corporation and then followed by its successors. Olmsted, Nolen, and Bennett's plans no longer served as a dominant model after the 1930s.

While Gruen's plan for Fort Worth included statistical data related to retail trade and traffic, the plan's structure borrowed heavily from narrative techniques of advertisement and salesmanship that Gruen had perfected for his suburban shopping center projects. Brochures for Gruen's Southdale Center and Northland Center in Detroit showed shoppers going about their daily routines and tried to find common ground with their intended audience. These pamphlets belonged as much to the world of advertising as much as to that of city planning.³⁷⁷ While Gruen's brochures and promotional materials for his malls used colorful renderings and narrative techniques, his first urban plan, for Appleton, Wisconsin, had relied on crude infographics and cartoons alone. For Fort Worth, however, the storyboarding techniques used in his shopping center advertisements, brochures, and pamphlets became a vehicle for advertising the city itself.

A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow begins with a description of Fort Worth in 1970.

"This is your city.
Tall Buildings, stretching spires to the sky!
Broad sweeps of tree-dotted parks.
Concrete ribbons of freeways on which an
endless stream of cars move by night
and by day."³⁷⁸
It is a young and vigorous city.
Underneath, it is flesh and blood, activity,
frustration and hope—and, with them,
a myriad of problem, problems facing all
cities everywhere, problems that must now
be recognized and solved."³⁷⁹

The plan posed two courses of action- "long range planning" or the "disintegration of the core."³⁸⁰ Gruen made an analogy between the core of the city and the heart of the human body. "The healthier the central district," he said, "the healthier the outlying districts."³⁸¹ He attributed the sickness suffered by Fort Worth to "the traffic problems created daily by 300,000 cars moving into, out of and through" the city.³⁸² "Traffic,

377 Victor Gruen and Larry Smith. *Shopping Towns USA* (New York, NY: Rheinhold Publishing Corporation, 1960), 253-254.

378 Victor Gruen Associates. *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* (Fort Worth, TX: Fort Worth Planning Committee, 1956), 3.

379 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 3.

380 Ibid, Ibid.

381 Ibid, Ibid.

382 Ibid, 4.

parking, noise, [and] fumes,”³⁸³ he said, had precipitated a deleterious blight that was spreading from the city’s heart outward.

Gruen saw Fort Worth’s dilemma as a product of competition between the city’s core and “suburban shopping centers built on land 1/50th the cost, with plenty of parking, roads relatively uncrowded, traffic hazards minimized, trees, shade, quiet, some of the amenities of life, increased sales, and lower rent.”³⁸⁴ Though he understood the inherent attraction of suburban locations, he took on the problems of the core with a boosterism and enthusiasm that helped him overlook the oppositional forces governing city and suburb. In 1955, only a few years removed from the birth of his first major shopping center commissions and before the passage of the Interstate Highway Act, Gruen recognized the inherent challenges of the core and peripheral shopping centers in competition, but did not acknowledge his own “complicity”³⁸⁵ in that process. Instead, he advocated for the application of a techno-spatial approach to saving the core, reliant upon four planning goals—making the “most productive use of the land,” ensuring a “free flow of traffic throughout the tributary area,” “a non-conflicting circulation pattern and provision for vehicle storage,” and a “re-integration of commercial and non-commercial activities.”³⁸⁶ In the case of Fort Worth, Gruen also noted the city’s uncertain position with reference to Dallas, which had by the 1950s overtaken its sister city as the banking and industrial capital of the region. In grave terms, Gruen called the city’s situation “dangerous and extremely urgent,”³⁸⁷ before turning to his vision of the future.

Having presented the Fort Worth of the present, Gruen fast-forwarded to the year 1970. Here he began the first of three narratives.³⁸⁸ The first narrative followed the commute of a business executive traveling to work downtown. “You leave your home and enter the freeway shortly thereafter and drive for five minutes at a steady 50 m.p.h. clip,”³⁸⁹ the story begins. “A few seconds more finds you in front of a large parking garage which you enter by direct ramp... For two years now you have driven directly to your parking garage and parked your car conveniently and swiftly.”³⁹⁰ The executive strolls from his car towards his office, stopping in a park to observe “one of the principal shopping malls of the city... a pedestrian’s dream, replete with trees, greenery, and shoppers’

383 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 4.

384 *Ibid.*, 5.

385 Hardwick, 217.

386 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 5. By this Gruen is referring to the city as “a commodious environment for its commercial activity, composed of courts, malls parks, districts and groups of varying character.” rather than as a mixed-use district per se.

387 *Ibid.*, 5.

388 Hardwick, 167-169.

389 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 6.

390 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

conveniences” reminiscent of “Rockefeller Plaza.”³⁹¹ The plan stressed the calm of a street scene in which “the pedestrian is king,” “noise and...fumes have been eliminated,” and there are “no traffic-laden streets to cross, no impatient waiting for the traffic signals to change, no frantic dodging of cars, no horns blaring, no sharp smell of monoxide fumes.”³⁹² From the terminal parking garage to the businessman’s office is only a few minutes walk, but if he prefers, he has the option of taking a “convenient electric powered pneumatic-tired train similar to those used a several world’s fairs.”³⁹³ Should he choose to walk, he would do so beneath “covered sidewalks” along “landscaped malls” and sidewalk cafes.³⁹⁴ “Before leaving for lunch after a busy morning,” the business executive looks out over the city at the malls and plazas and skyscrapers below, struggling to “remember the city as it had been in 1956.”³⁹⁵

Gruen and his contemporaries would use the iconic image of the executive reflecting over a transformed cityscape over and over in central business district plans of the era.³⁹⁶ The narrative of the executive demonstrated concretely both the primary audience for whom the plan was written as well as to whom the transformed city would ultimately cater. In writing for the *Harvard Business Review* or publicizing City X directly to Business Week, Gruen played “not to his peers through *Architectural Forum* or *Architectural Record*,” but instead “addressed his proposals directly to the business community.”³⁹⁷ Gruen’s appeal to the downtown businessman made sense. After all, it was businessmen like J.B. Thomas, Richard King Mellon, and James Rouse whose interests aligned most clearly with downtown in that era, and whose political clout and business acumen could shepherd urban renewal from idealistic policy to built reality.

Gruen addressed his second narrative to a downtown department store executive (with branch stores in suburban shopping centers).³⁹⁸ The merchant, also in an executive position, is “reviewing quarterly sales figures,” in a new office building downtown when he recalls “one evening years ago when [he] attended a meeting at which the plan for a greater Fort Worth of tomorrow had been discussed.”³⁹⁹ In a moment of proud theatricality, Gruen suddenly emerges as an actor in his own drama, “an exuberant booster” whose soothsaying proved to be the start of the

391 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 6.

392 Ibid, Ibid.

393 Ibid, 8.

394 Ibid, Ibid.

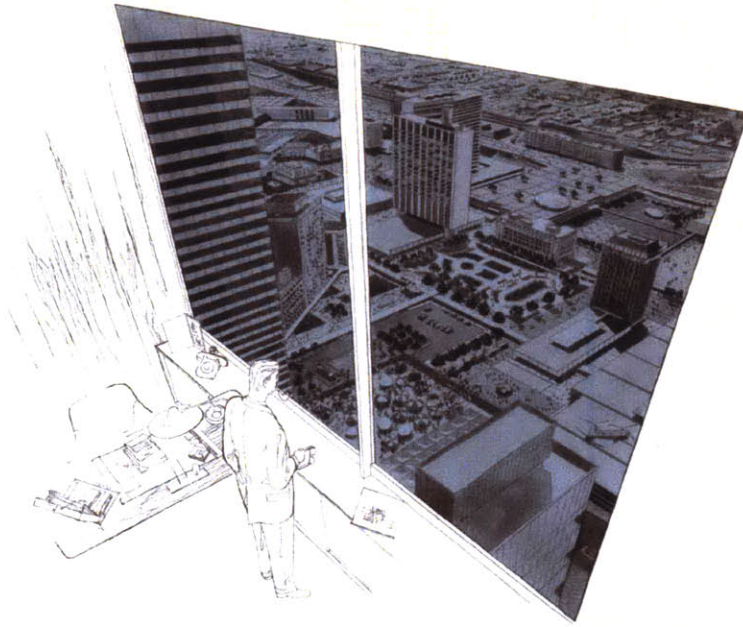
395 Ibid, Ibid.

396 Notable examples of its use include in the Charles Center Plan (1958), Gruen’s Plan for Kalamazoo (1958), and the promotional poster for Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston (1974).

397 Hardwick, 167.

398 The inclusion of this note further reflected Gruen’s belief in the potential for interdependence between suburban and urban malls.

399 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 9.



3.12
The Executive
Victor Gruen Associates
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow
(1956)

city's resurgence. He “remember[s] the expense required to rebuild [his] basement completely for underground receiving,” and when “hordes of people came to observe and to experience the heretofore unknown freedom of movement on a downtown street completely devoid of vehicular traffic.”⁴⁰⁰ At the conclusion of this vignette, the merchant observes “the latest addition” to downtown, “a two-level mall on the street directly below,” with “the street...roofed across at the third floor.”⁴⁰¹ The merchant then turns from his window reflection and goes “back to the plans for [his] newest unit—an 8,000 sq. ft. suburban store.”⁴⁰²

For Gruen, the narrative of the department store magnate was critical. As more and more stores sought suburban locations and branches, many doubted the long-term viability of downtown and the feasibility of having two locations in competition with another.⁴⁰³ Gruen reassured this audience that a mutual relationship between core and periphery was possible, restoring the value of downtown assets as well as the continued expansion and profits to be made in the suburbs.

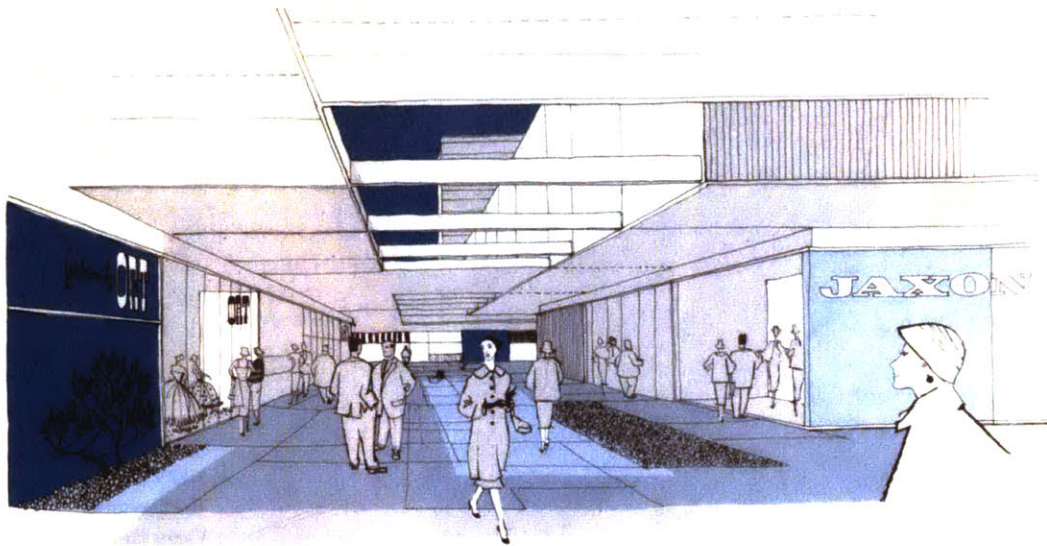
Gruen's final narrative follows a housewife going downtown on a shopping trip. In his earliest storefront commissions, the female shopper,

400 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 9.

401 *Ibid.*, 10.

402 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

403 Sales at Gruen's Southdale Center, for instance, quickly outweighed those of Dayton's downtown location.



3.13
 The Housewife
 Victor Gruen Associates
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow
 (1956)

lured into the recessed arcade, had been his protagonist.⁴⁰⁴ “There had been a time,” he says, “when things like going to the bank, talking with the lawyer, and other such downtown pursuits had been handled by your husband, in addition to his full-time endeavors of earning a living for the family. Now you are able to take care of these chores for him because it’s so pleasant to come downtown, and it gives you an added sense of responsibility and accomplishment that you enjoy.” On her walk from the bus terminal, the housewife passes a “colorful temporary exhibit” and is impressed by the “stateliness of the bank.” She “didn’t always like to come downtown” and “can remember when it was a disagreeable chore.”⁴⁰⁵ A sketch accompanied the final vignette of a woman alone beneath a covered arcade walking through a pedestrianized mall. A pair of men in suits stand in the background, enjoying a chance encounter, while the profile of a woman wearing a hat and posh earrings is the foreground, just beneath the sign for Jaxon, a hat company.

The plan’s “liberation” of the housewife embodied Lizabeth Cohen’s observation that the public space of shopping centers was “tailored to women’s needs and desires as consumers” and that it “not only... pitch[ed] itself to women, it sought to empower them as orchestrators of their families’ leisure.”⁴⁰⁶ Renderings of well-to-do middle class women

⁴⁰⁴ See Wall, 18-41 and Smiley, *Pedestrian Modern*, Chapter 2 for a discussion of Gruen’s storefront work.

⁴⁰⁵ Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 11.

⁴⁰⁶ Lizabeth Cohen. “From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America.” *The American Historical Review* 101.4 (1996): 1072.

were a frequent motif of store designs going back to the 1920s, in no small part because, as David Smiley states, “the protagonist of mass consumption, especially of this larger-scaled retailing, was feminized.”⁴⁰⁷ In Fort Worth, however, while the female consumer is made to feel safe and empowered under the covered walkways of the city, her narrative is secondary to the male executive in the office tower. The difference between the male protagonist of the downtown plan and the female protagonist of the suburban shopping center is further reflected in transportation modes. At Fort Worth, the woman takes the bus to go shopping, whereas the male executive drives to his allotted parking space. In brochures for the Southdale Center, meanwhile, the woman found herself behind the wheel looking for a parking space. Though often at the center of illustrations for storefronts and shopping centers, women were rarely the focal point of downtown plans. Most often, they are depicted under male supervision, often sitting at a café table, meeting someone for a date, or supervising a family outing.⁴⁰⁸

Before and After

Among the most iconic pair of images in the Fort Worth plan is a striking aerial before-after image of the plan. On page one and page seven of the report, Gruen provides his audience with a startling comparison between the Fort Worth of Yesterday and the Fort Worth of Tomorrow. The former, an aerial black and white “before” photograph, reflects what Grady Clay called a “break” where “there is an abrupt, visible switch in the direction and/or the design of streets—especially where the pattern shifts diagonally.”⁴⁰⁹ The “after” aerial subverts the diagonal break of its predecessor by transforming the city into an amoebic nucleus circumscribed by a kind of cellular wall. The wall is composed of a massive circumferential loop road and immense terminal parking garages, together enclosing a collection of modern skyscrapers beneath which a network of walkways, plazas, malls, parasols, and architectural follies form an active culture humming with life.⁴¹⁰ Gruen’s use of the fortification metaphor, for which his native Vienna provided inspiration, provided a singular expression in Fort Worth and emerged as the major characteristic feature of downtown plans through the late 1960s. The highway ring around downtown, while not invented by Gruen, at Fort Worth achieved a form-giving potential that captivated other cities and enticed them to follow suit.

As compared to other plans of its era, Gruen’s land use plan for

407 Smiley, 6.

408 These conclusions are based in part on the plan coding analysis in Chapter 4.

409 Clay, *Close-Up*, 42.

410 Gruen, *Heart of Our Cities*, 272.



Fort Worth was highly unconventional. The plan contained no assessment of the existing land uses, as was common in a Bartholomew-style report. Instead, the plan depicted land use with a series of amorphous blue, black and gray “bubble diagrams” contained within a cellular outline of downtown Fort Worth. Retail marketing uses accounted for close to 75% of the downtown area in Gruen’s scheme, dwarfing the second highest land use, office buildings, which accounted for only 14%.⁴¹¹ Using methodologies that he had developed for his shopping centers, Gruen calculated that Fort Worth would need to create 59,915 parking

411 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 16-17.



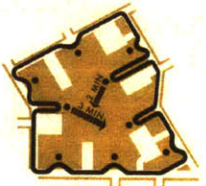
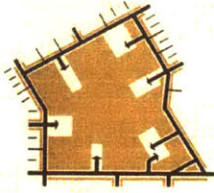
spaces by 1970.⁴¹² Other land uses, such as wholesale marketing, civic and governmental facilities, and cultural and entertainment facilities, are indicated in the plan, but appear at the fringe of the main retail area. Breaking with the conventional civic center plan, Gruen's land use diagram called for a "highly compact entity with minimum distances between its components,"⁴¹³ using the template of shopping center plan rather than a traditional land use map.

Gruen further reinforced the notion of a compact, bounded center in the plan's circulatory diagrams. Here, Fort Worth's future was

3.14
Before-After
Victor Gruen Associates
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow
(1956).

412 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 17.

413 Ibid. Ibid.



3.15

Circulation Diagrams

Victor Gruen Associates

A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow
(1956).

again posed as binary: “Fort Worth, like all growing cities, is faced with two alternatives: to build roads to accommodate these cars in the central section, or to altogether ban cars from the central section.”⁴¹⁴ The plan suggests that the first strategy—the creation of a freeway system through downtown—would be disruptive and “of enormous expense.”⁴¹⁵ The second, and preferred, strategy, a loop highway that funnels cars into “perimeter parking lots and structures,”⁴¹⁶ is described through a series of four diagrams denoting the key elements of the plan—a belt highway, perimeter parking lots to intercept traffic entering the core, a highly walkable, pedestrianized center with slow moving electric shuttle cars, and service roads that penetrate the main pedestrian area to provide drop-off points for buses. Gruen’s above ground transportation strategy was complemented by his conviction that the city build a subsurface loading network much like those being implemented in his new shopping centers and which had been included in the design of Rockefeller Center. “Deliveries are best received at other than ground level,” the plan declares. “Ground level space is the premium space and to sacrifice any of it for the handling of goods is economically wasteful.”⁴¹⁷ In a flight of fancy, Gruen also declared that “since the roofs of the parking structures are designed as heliports, and are capable of handling vertical take-off aircraft, the sub-surface trucking facilities also service each of these structures thereby expediting the flow of air mail and air freight.”⁴¹⁸

Gruen’s conceptual plan for circulation at Fort Worth built upon earlier schemes for Chicago, Appleton, Syracuse, and Rye, yet expressed all of these ideas at a hitherto unimaginable scale. While others, most notably Louis Kahn in his 1952 Traffic Study for Philadelphia and “Toward a Plan for Midtown Philadelphia,”⁴¹⁹ had envisaged these ideas taking root at the scale of a downtown, not until Gruen’s Fort Worth scheme had the idea been so precisely rendered and seriously proposed. Nevertheless, the main site plan for Fort Worth proved both highly specific as well as remarkably abstract. The plan has no key and, in contrast to later plans by Gruen, lacks any color-coded differentiation between pedestrianized areas and street traffic. Buildings are colored in a spectrum ranging from brown to burgundy and interspersed with a series of abstract geometrical

414 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 18.

415 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.* The costs of Gruen’s own scheme are of course overlooked here.

416 *Ibid.*, 19.

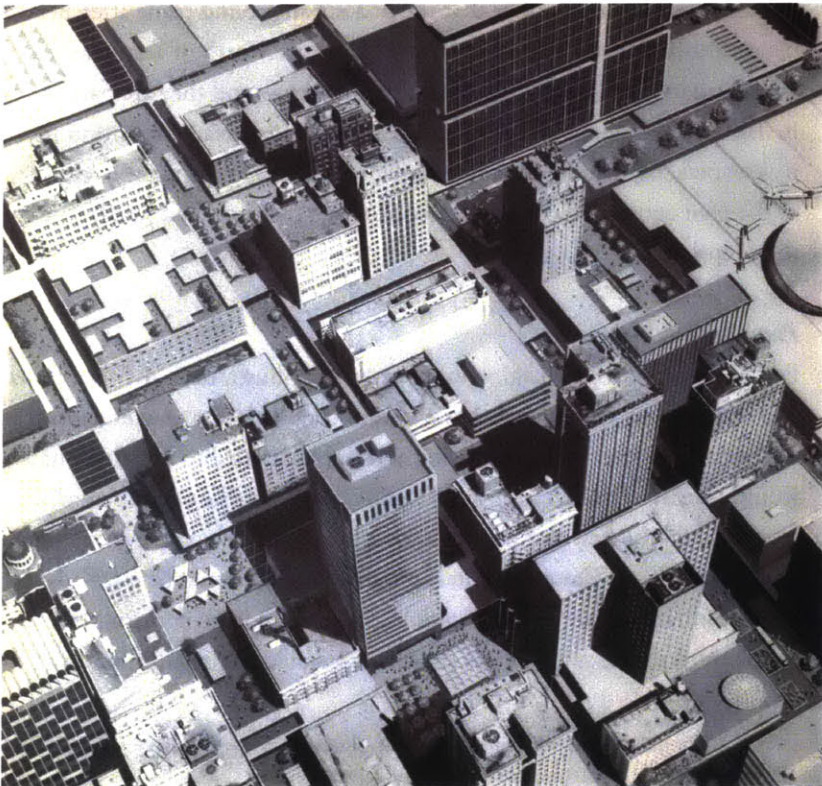
417 *Ibid.*, 20.

418 *Ibid.*, 21.

419 Louis Kahn. “Toward a Plan for Midtown Philadelphia,” *Perspecta* 2 (1953): 18. Kahn notably had envisioned “parking harbors” that would provide access to a pedestrian way on Chestnut Street in Philadelphia. Other examples cited at the time were the proposed loop highway for Kansas City, MO and Boston’s Central Artery “Loop.” See “What City Pattern: Central City Freeways,” *Architectural Forum* 105.3 (1956): 116-117. Also see Smiley, 238.



3.16
Site Plan
Victor Gruen Associates
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow
(1956).



3.17
Aerial Perspective
Victor Gruen Associates
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow
(1956).

renderings that Gruen's team approached the project with a comparable degree of specificity and rigor to their shopping center commissions. The plan zooms in to a second area, a grouping of cultural and entertainment facilities, distinguished by a familiarly shaped auditorium, modeled after theaters included in outlying shopping centers like Shopper's World in Framingham. "Adult play areas, restaurants, coffee shops and several hotels complete the grouping—thus creating within the central city a combined play area, an educational and cultural center, an entertainment district and an urban living environment unequalled by any that now exist."⁴²⁴

As at Northland, the cultural amenities of the dream city were studded with plantings and public artwork. The most widely published perspective from the plan depicted a scene looking out towards an open plaza adjacent to the new "Commerce Street Garage." The plaza's atmosphere is vibrant and boisterous, with chaotic streams of people meeting, talking, lounging, and shopping. There are families with children; men reading newspapers; dogs barking at one another; and pigeons gobbling breadcrumbs beneath a tree whose leaves have begun to fall.⁴²⁵ A man looks down onto the plaza, stopping to take a picture halfway across the elevated walkway. In looking towards the reader, the photographer invites the audience into the scene and makes them conscious of their involvement in it. As the reader becomes aware of their own presence in the space, they also notice that the pedestrian ground plane stretches beneath their feet and all around them. The Fort Worth of Yesterday has given way to the Greater Fort Worth of Tomorrow and they are part of it. The image is one of peculiar genius and its widespread circulation in newspapers, trade journals, and popular magazines following the release of the plan convinced countless downtowners that they had finally found their reprieve.

Planning Implementation

For all of its flights of imagination, poetry, and illustration, *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* was nevertheless a serious proposal. The plan ends with a series of sections detailing phasing and implementation. The first phase would consist of the acquisition of right-of-ways for the circumferential freeways and the first two major parking lots.⁴²⁶ Following the completion of the East-West Freeway, an interim traffic pattern would be established and subsurface delivery systems would begin to undergo construction. In the third phase, rubber-tired shuttle cars would begin shuttling

424 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 26.

425 The inclusion of birds seems to have been a direct derivation of Gordon Cullen's motifs of public space.

426 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 28.

shapes indicating pavilions, follies, sculptures, kiosks, and monuments. The most easily distinguished element of the site plan—the terminal parking structures with heliports on top—appear as gridded gray megastructures connecting directly to the loop highways. Tiny figures litter the ground plane, suggesting a festival atmosphere akin to Disneyland or a World’s Fair. The Disney-like character of the plan was unmistakable, reinforced by the fact that Gruen’s original office in Los Angeles was located on the Walt Disney Studio lot⁴²⁰ and that Gruen had once mused that Disney was his ideal client.⁴²¹

In keeping with its playful narrative, following the site plan was a lengthy prose poem expounding the benefits of the proposal. In a rhythmic chant, each paragraph began with “This is the plan...” and is followed by an advertisement of awkwardly phrased improvements.⁴²² Beside the poem is a metropolitan area map of the Fort Worth region with the downtown at its center above a second map of downtown’s silhouette atop Midtown Manhattan, centered on Rockefeller Center. Absent from Gruen’s plan was a well-defined metropolitan strategy. The core was instead portrayed as an isolated project, akin to Rockefeller Center’s city within a city or the Back Bay Center, rather than the center of a complex regional framework. Despite the clear regional implications of retail, the plan treated Fort Worth’s downtown as a singular, isolated complex, excluding the regional analyses that had been a notable feature of plans going back to the New Deal and earlier.⁴²³

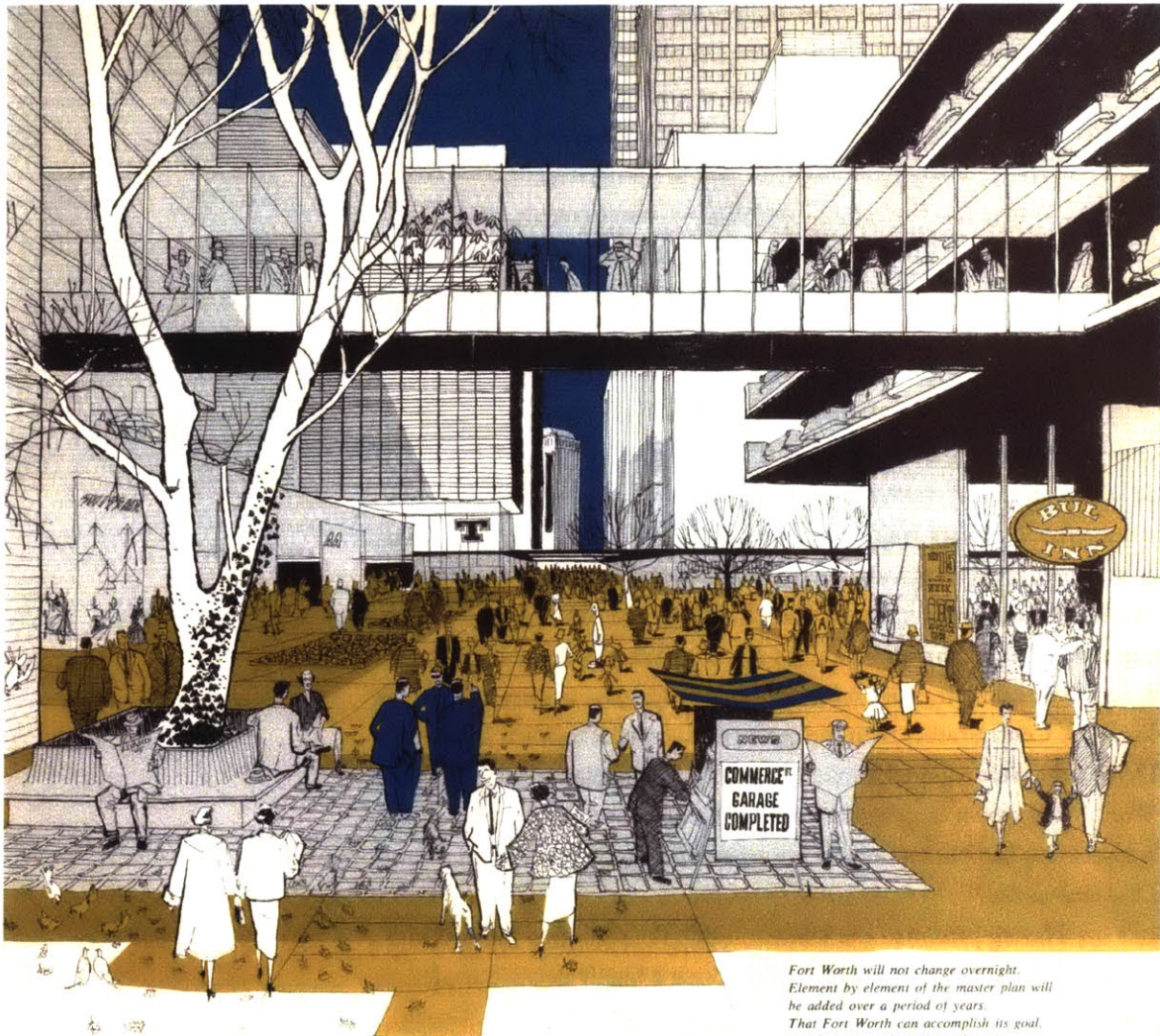
Having presented the scheme in full, the plan then zoomed into a typical nine-block section of the core. Using a highly detailed rendering based on an existing aerial photograph and an abstract site plan, Gruen shows the grid “refined into an interrelated grouping of plazas and malls each with individual character. As compared to other utopian schemes of the time, the renderings for this section provide a remarkable degree of specificity at first glance. The plan illustrates which buildings are to be preserved and which are to be cleared; new buildings have each been detailed individually as a unique architectural complex and building group; plazas include a range of sculptural elements, plantings, and arcades. The impression of the whole is palpable, as it is clear from the

420 Based on conversation with Crawford Westbrook, Vice President and Head of Planning, Victor Gruen Associates, 1961-1979. Westbrook also suggested that the Fort Worth plan might have been the genius of Karl Van Leuven, Gruen’s partner, who had been an animator at Disney. Van Leuven, however, is not credited in the plan and was not the partner in charge. Moreover, the plan had been led by the Los Angeles office rather than Gruen’s team in Detroit, further bringing this theory into question.

421 According to historian Sam Gennaway’s research, Walt Disney owned a copy of Gruen’s 1964 book *The Heart of Our Cities*. Sam Gennaway. *Walt and the Progress of the Promise City* (Ayefour, 2011).

422 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 23.

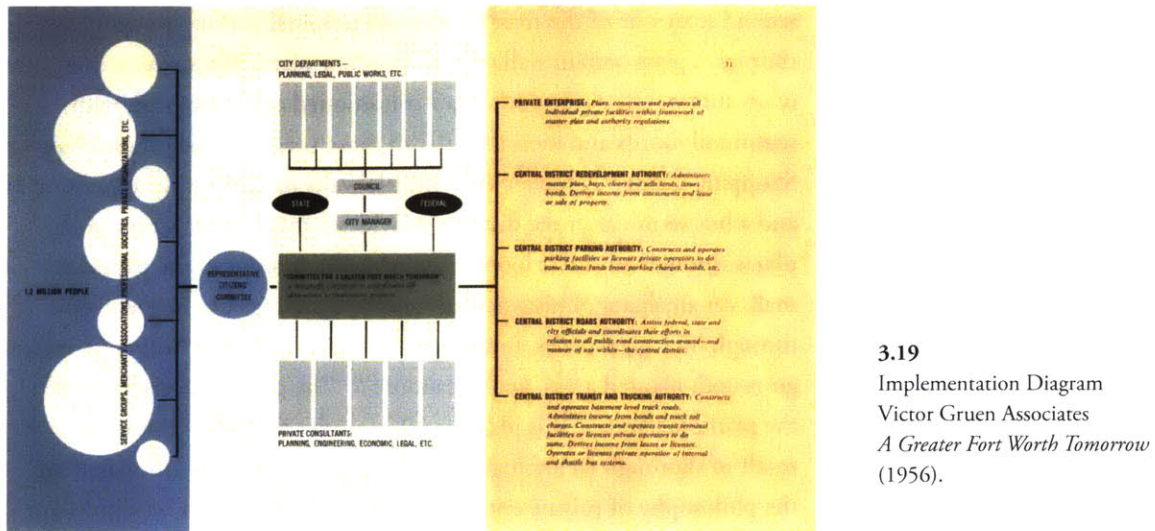
423 Ibid, Ibid.



Fort Worth will not change overnight.
Element by element of the master plan will
be added over a period of years.
That Fort Worth can accomplish its goal,
step by step, without disruption of
its present and future activities, is clearly
illustrated by the following four maps.



3.18
Ground-Level Perspective of Pedestrian Mall
Victor Gruen Associates
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow (1956).



3.19
Implementation Diagram
Victor Gruen Associates
A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow
(1956).

consumers throughout a pedestrianized core. In the final phase, all of the surface parking lots have been converted to multi-level structures “with a combined capacity of 60,000 cars,” the “sub-surface delivery route is complete and over 2,600 trucks per day service the city,” and “there are now in operation 9.6 million sq. ft. of retail space.”⁴²⁷

In his chapter on implementation, Gruen laid out his four essential requirements for implementation—Will, Organization, [the] Plan, and Realization. “Plans might create cities on paper,” he wrote, “but the realization of these thought-out schemes from drawings and calculations to an actual living environment is a task of immense proportions.”⁴²⁸ In a matrix illustrating the governance of the plan’s implementation, Gruen cited the creation a “Committee for a Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow,” “a nonprofit corporation that coordinated all downtown revitalization projects,”⁴²⁹ and four new public authorities, in addition to the persistence of private sector support. Authorities suggested by the plan included a Central District Redevelopment Authority to administer the master plan, buy, clear and sell lands, as well as issue bonds; a Central District Parking Authority to construct and operate parking facilities or license private operators to do so; a Central District Roads Authority to assist federal state, and city officials with public road construction; and a Central District Transit and Trucking Authority to construct and operate basement level truck roads and operate and license private operators to run internal shuttle bus systems.⁴³⁰

The concluding image from the plan depicts a scene from the

427 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 29.

428 *Ibid.*, 30.

429 *Ibid.*, 31.

430 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

second story one of the massive planned terminal parking garages looking through a glass curtain wall onto an outdoor plaza. The space, reminiscent of an automobile showroom, is air conditioned and contained, with sculptural motifs and kiosks similar to those used in Gruen's Southdale Shopping Center. A rubber-tired shuttle waits to pick up customers outside and a bus terminal in the distance provides public transit access to the plazas through an access loop penetrating the interior of the pedestrian mall. An amalgam of historic and modern buildings can be made out through blue glass panes, towering over a rich scene that includes a merry-go-round, planted areas, and a teahouse.⁴³¹ The caption to the right of the plan proclaims, "This plan for A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow is the result of thorough technological and economic planning. It is based on the philosophy of private enterprise. It develops the ultimate solution to the problem of automobiles on our city streets. It recognizes the pending breakdown of our antiquated distribution system... The plan insures freedom from blight and guarantees economic stability."⁴³²

Townscape Modernism: Gordon Cullen and Jane Jacobs

To realize the Gruen Plan would take more than private enterprise. So much was stated in the plan itself. It called for four new authorities, a citizen's commission, a planning committee, and clearance beyond anything attempted in any American city to that date. Yet its ambition was contagious. Writing of the plan in his book *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (1976) the architecture critic Reyner Banham wrote, "Its scale and absoluteness were stunning; the first of the 'business districts-on-a-podium' projects that inspired megastructuralists; widely published, it set a standard of detailed elaboration and sheer vastness of ambition that all later projects had to match if they were to be taken seriously."⁴³³ Grady Clay said of the plan, "So successful was Gruen in selecting, simplifying, and then exaggerating the symptoms and solutions for a 'dying downtown' that his plan captured the imaginations of central-city saviors across the land... It was dramatic, grandiose, efficient—and expensive. Gruen's originality and verve, his ironic eloquence, put him into the national spotlight."⁴³⁴ In her 1958 essay in *Fortune*, "Downtown is for People,"⁴³⁵ Jane Jacobs called out the Fort Worth Plan by Gruen as an exemplar of

431 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 34-35.

432 Ibid, Ibid.

433 Reyner Banham. *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1976), 42.

434 Grady Clay. *Close-Up: How to Read the American City* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 61.

435 Jane Jacobs. "Downtown is For People," in *The Exploding Metropolis* ed. William H. Whyte. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1958), 157-184.

good planning even as she criticized contemporary projects, including Pittsburgh's Gateway Center and the plans drawn up for Philadelphia's Penn Center, New Orleans, Detroit, and Cleveland. Foreshadowing her popular critique of urban renewal that would be published three years later in *The Death and Life of American Cities*, Jacobs wrote:

"From city to city the architects' sketches conjure up the same dreary scene; here is not hint of individuality of whim or surprise, no hint that here is a city with a tradition and flavor all its own. These projects will not revitalize downtown; they will deaden it. For they work at cross-purposes to the city. They banish the street. They banish its function. They banish its variety. There is one notable exception, the Gruen plan for Fort Worth; ironically, the main point of it has been missed by many cities that plan to imitate it. Almost without exception the projects have one standard solution for every need: commerce, medicine, culture, government—whatever the activity, they take a part of the city's life, abstract it from the hustle and bustle of downtown, and set it, like a self-sufficient island, in majestic isolation..."⁴³⁶

Jacobs continued in praising the Gruen plan as a remedy for downtown.

"The plan by Victor Gruen Associates for Fort Worth is an outstanding example. It has been publicized chiefly for its arrangements to provide enormous perimeter parking garages and convert the downtown into a pedestrian island, but its main purpose is to enliven the streets with variety and detail. This is a point being overlooked by most of the eighty-odd cities, at last count, were seriously considering emulation of the Gruen plans' traffic principles. There is no magic in simply removing cars from downtown, and certainly none in stressing peace, quiet, and dead space. The removal of cars is important only because of the great opportunities it opens to make streets work harder and to keep downtown activities compact and concentrated. To these ends, the excellent Gruen plan includes, in its street treatment, sidewalk arcades, poster columns, flags, vending kiosks, display stands, outdoor cafes, bandstands, flower beds, and special lighting effects. Street concerts, dances, and exhibits are to be fostered. The whole point is to make the streets more surprising, more compact, more variegated, and busier than before—not less so. One of the beauties of the Fort Worth plan is that it works with existing buildings, and this is a positive virtue not just as a cost-saving expedient. Think of any city street that people enjoy and you will see that characteristically it has old buildings mixed with new...Designing a dream city is easy; rebuilding a living one takes imagination."⁴³⁷

Jacobs had made positive reviews of Gruen's work before, including in a 1954 *Architectural Forum* article that called Northland in Detroit a "classic in shopping center planning, in the sense that the

436 Jacobs, "Downtown is for People," 157-158.

437 Ibid, 162-163, 184.



3.20, 3.21, 3.22

top: Rockefeller Center
middle: The Loop, Chicago
bottom: Union Square, San Francisco

“Townscape America”
Illustrations by Gordon Cullen
(1958) in Jane Jacobs. “Downtown is for People.” *Fortune*, April 1958.

Rockefeller Center is a classic in skyscraper group planning, or Radburn, New Jersey, in suburban residential planning.”⁴³⁸ Gruen’s approach to modernism foreshadowed and reflected an emerging counter critique that sought humanism in the midst of renewal. The drawings of Gruen’s Fort Worth plan by Carlos Diniz and Ben Althen portrayed a vibrant scene that balked at the sterility of the modern in favor of the festivity of the fair. Accompanying Jacobs’ article were a series of drawings by the renowned British illustrator Gordon Cullen of the *Architectural Review*. Since his 1947 “Westminster Regained” proposal, Cullen’s work had become increasingly well known as part of the *Architectural Review*’s “Townscape” series. In 1958, William H. Whyte, Jr. invited Cullen and Ian Nairn of the British *Architectural Review* to the United States to “look at the townscape of our own cities, to sketch not the horrors known so well, but the strengths, so easily overlooked.”⁴³⁹ For the series, which was published in *The Exploding Metropolis* (1958), Cullen made drawings of public spaces around the United States, including images of Rockefeller Center, Chicago’s Downtown Loop district; Union Square in San Francisco; the Riverwalk in San Antonio; Louisville’s Courthouse Square; and Louisburg Square in Boston.

Throughout the emergence of CIAM, the British *Architectural Review* had remained an eclectic and independent voice never fully aligned with the precepts of modernism. Under its director and chairman, Hubert de Cronin Hastings, writing under then the pen name Ivor de Wolfe, the *Review* called upon planners to make a “systematic ‘collection of individual examples of civic design’ to build a better appreciation of the English townscape.”⁴⁴⁰ In 1946, the *Review* hired Gordon Cullen to serve as its assistant art editor. His drawings for the publication’s “Townscape” column circulated widely and culminated in his seminal work, *The Concise Townscape* (1961), which pulled together his quirky proposals, loose sketches, and pedestrian-level perspectives of the British landscape.

Cullen perfected a technique of drawing called ‘serial vision,’ which he described in his first large-scale illustration for “Westminster Regained,” discussed briefly at the end of Chapter Two. “The view of a town as a piece of moving scenery hardly enters the head of the man in the street, yet for the man in the street especially this is usually what the town is—a moving set...A visual experience, therefore, in which every shade of

438 Jane Jacobs. “Northland Shopping Center: A New Yardstick For Measuring The Size And Quality Of Shopping Centers- J. L. Hudson’s Northland Near Detroit by Architect Victor Gruen Associates,” *Architectural Forum* 100.6 (1954): 103.

439 Whyte, *The Exploding Metropolis*. See inset sketches after page 158.

440 Christopher Klemek. *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin*. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 85.



white and grey, subtle contrasts of shadow and light, and a series of objects, the towers, masts, roofs and spires of Westminster, which continually reassemble in a really miraculous variety of 'compositions,' cannot be enjoyed single-mindedly because the area has not been developed as a homogeneous unity...⁴⁴¹

Cullen's drawings for the *Review* did not eschew modernism in favor of traditionalism. Rather, they critiqued the tendency of the avant-garde to conveniently edit out elements of the cityscape that cluttered their proposals.⁴⁴² In one *Townscape* column from April 1958 called "Streetscape with Furniture: The Attack on the Corridor Street at Notting Hill Gate,"⁴⁴³ Cullen's colleague Kenneth Browne drew a traditional modern perspective bereft of all street life and clutter under the title "Image." He paired it with a second image, bearing the title "Reality." The image of "Reality" included everything that had been excluded from the first scene, but was necessary to make the city function: cut outs of lampposts, signs, gates,

3.23
Bankside Regained. Gordon
Cullen, *The Architectural Review*
105 (1949).

441 Gordon Cullen. "Westminster Regained." *Architectural Review* 102 (1947): 159.

442 A parallel may be drawn here to the early postcards of American main streets and downtowns, whose cluttered elements- wires, light posts, debris, etc. were frequently edited out of their composition. See Isenberg, *Downtown America*, Chapter 2.

443 Kenneth Browne. "Streetscape with Furniture: The Attack on the Corridor Street at Notting Hill Gate," *Architectural Review* 123 (1958), 312-323.



3.24

“Townscape Motopia”

Illustrations by Gordon Cullen
in G.A. Jellicoe’s *Motopia: A Study
in the Evolution of Urban Landscape*
(New York, NY: Praeger, 1961).

and traffic lights all collaged onto the perspective. Cullen’s drawings often celebrated the bollards, flags, and street lamps that had been edited out of conventional renderings, in turn producing scenes that were both highly pragmatic as well as romantic in their gestures.

Cullen, who had graduated from the Royal Institute of Architects and then went on to work for architects Raymond McGrath and then Berthold Lubetkin, had excelled as an illustrator in practice and developed his own style of drawing before joining the *Review* in 1946. Some of his best-known works, which were later featured in *Townscape*, were originally published in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In addition to “Westminster Regained,” Cullen’s colorful 1949 study “Bankside Regained” for River Thames; his 1949 series on “Outdoor Publicity;” and sketches he made of Lyme Regis, Waterside New Town, and the Looe Sea Front in 1950 gave force of vision to a nascent countermovement brewing from both inside and outside of the modernist establishment.⁴⁴⁴ Cullen’s drawings of cities and his subtle interventions tempered modernist proposals by integrating them into an existing physical and cultural fabric. In Geoffrey Jellicoe’s 1961 proposal Motopia, a monumental utopia in the tradition of Hilberseimer, Cullen sketched a series of street scenes from within the megastructure, a gridded highway-building hybrid joined by soaring roundabouts. Cullen’s drawings showed old Englishmen in caps chatting beneath a thicket of trees, with people, street furniture, and signage obscuring the totality of Jellicoe’s proposal.

Carlos Diniz and the Art of Delineation

Despite the widespread attention paid to the renderings of Fort Worth, existing scholarship on Gruen hardly acknowledges the pivotal role played by the plan’s delineators in crafting the plan’s iconic perspectives. Few histories of planning or architecture fully explore the role of the delineator, even though their drawings are often the primary manifestation of the work.⁴⁴⁵ In plans, delineation plays an especially critical role, since these renderings mark main advertisement of the scheme, as well as in many cases, its only physical artifact. The profession of architectural delineation did not emerge until 1870s and 1880s, when large architectural firms began calling upon illustrators to make drawings for publication in

⁴⁴⁴ David Gosling. *Gordon Cullen: Visions of Urban Design*. (London, UK: Academy Editions, 1996).

⁴⁴⁵ Several books on delineation were consulted during this thesis, including: Alfred Kemper. *Presentation Drawings by American architects* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1973; 1977); Albert O. Halse. *Architectural Rendering: the Techniques of Contemporary Presentation*. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1960; 1972; 1988); *Building Illusion: The Works of Carlos Diniz* (Tokyo Process Architecture Co., 1992); Ernest E. Burden. *Architectural Delineation: a Photographic Approach to Presentation*. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1992.) Most of these books featured exemplary presentation drawings by American architects and/or provided technical advice for delineators themselves.

professional journals.⁴⁴⁶ A number of illustrators rose to prominence around the turn of the century with the rise of City Beautiful movement. These included David Gregg, Eldon Deane, Harvey Ellis, Schell Lewis, Arthur Guptill, Francis Hoppen, Hughson Hawley, Marion Mahoney, and Otto Eggers, as well as architect/draftsmen such as Bertram Goodhue, Frank Lloyd Wright and Wilson Eyre.⁴⁴⁷

While most of the delineators of his time remain largely unknown, Jules Guérin (1846-1946) proved an exception. Guérin, who was born in St. Louis in 1866 and studied in Chicago⁴⁴⁸ then Paris, first emerged as a draftsman executing a small series of renderings for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Guérin came into prominence as an illustrator when he was retained by Charles McKim to produce renderings for the McMillan Plan for Washington D.C. in 1901. Most famous for his colorful illustrations of Burnham and Bennett's 1909 *Plan of Chicago*, he was renowned "for his ability to create an atmosphere that vividly suggested local qualities of light and material, and his tendency toward 'suppression of detail in favor of structural mass.'"⁴⁴⁹ After the *Plan of Chicago*, Guérin emerged as the foremost delineator of the City Beautiful era and provided illustrations for most of Bennett's plans through the 1920s.⁴⁵⁰

Like Guérin, the architectural delineator Hugh Ferriss was born in St. Louis. It was in New York City, however, working first under Cass Gilbert and then as a freelancer delineator, that Ferriss established his signature rendering style. Early in his career, Ferriss' drawings had retained a Beaux Arts aesthetic, yet over time he developed his own chiaroscuro technique using charcoal to create an effect similar to Piranesi's mid-eighteenth century drawings of imaginary labyrinthine prisons. Ferriss received his most famous commission to make a series of drawings for the architect Harvey Wiley Corbett in 1922 that would demonstrate the formal implications of New York City's zoning code. These illustrations, which created a series of exaggerated bird's eye view perspectives over an imaginary future Gotham, were later published as part of the Regional Plan of New York and compiled in Ferriss' 1929 book *The Metropolis of Tomorrow*. Ferriss, as Guérin had done for the City Beautiful, defined the vision of the 1920s and 1930s, giving physical expression to the ideas of

446 *Jules Guerin, Master Delineator, An exhibition organized by the School of Architecture* (Houston, TX: Rice University, December 1983), 5

447 *Jules Guerin*, 5.

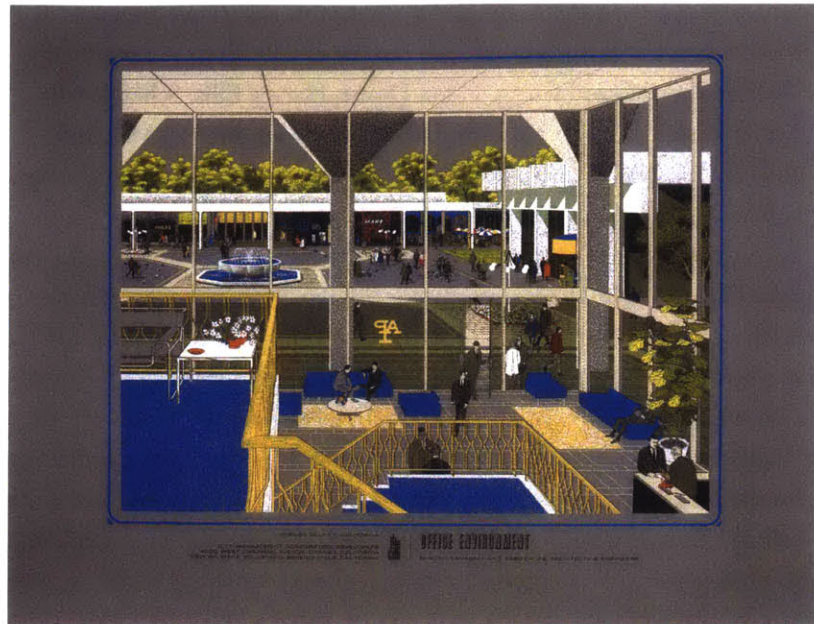
448 It is interesting to note that Guerin is said to have shared a studio and roomed in a boardinghouse with the famous American cartoonist Winsor McCay in 1889.

449 *Guerin*, 7.

450 While Guerin had earned considerable recognition for his planning commissions, he aspired to attain fame as a painter and muralist. Though he undertook several important painting commissions after WWI, including the mural at the Lincoln Memorial, Pennsylvania Station in New York Station, and the Cleveland Terminal Building, he never earned great recognition as painter and retired after the 1920s.

3.25

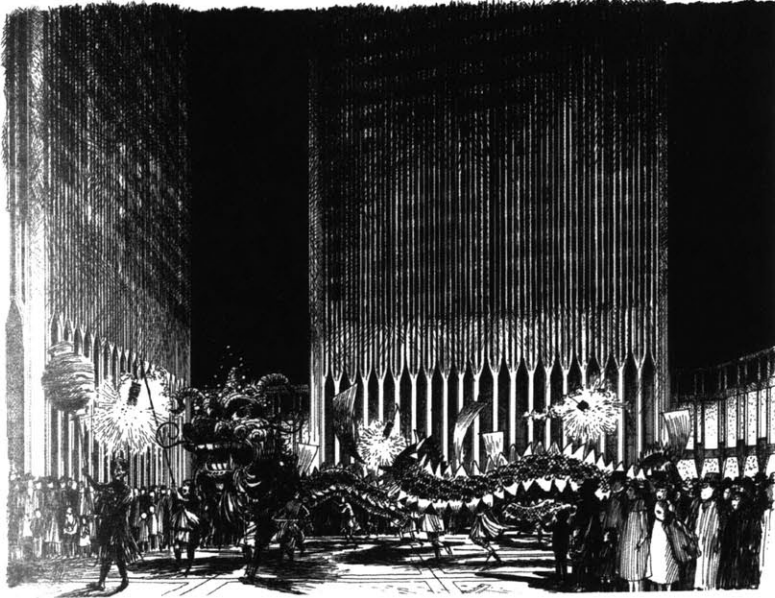
“Office Environment” for *The City*,
Orange County, California, 1965.
Illustrations by Carlos Diniz
for Minoru Yamaski and Associates



skyscraper setbacks, elevated streets, and sunken expressways then taking shape theoretically. Though best known for his work in the 1920s and 1930s, Ferriss continued practicing through the 1960s, even producing plans for civic centers and other commissions that stylistically evoked the Gotham of an earlier age.

While few major city plans were produced from the 1930s through the mid-1940s, there was no shortage of visions put forth by delineators. Ferriss' famous drawings for the 1939 New York World's Fair and Frank Lloyd Wright's drawings of Broadacre City (1932) stand among the foremost examples of utopian image-making from the period. As important in this era, however, were the visions put forth by modernists including Le Corbusier, Richard Neutra and Ludwig Hilberseimer, all of whom devised widely circulated proposals for utopian city schemes echoing the 1933 CIAM Athens charter.

Among the most consistently overlooked aspects of the Gruen plan was the role played by the illustrator Carlos Diniz, who worked for Victor Gruen Associates from 1952 to 1957, before starting his own firm and emerging as one of the foremost delineators of his era. Diniz, with Ben Althen, who worked with Gruen through the 1970s, were the principal delineators of the Fort Worth Plan. In his 1992 memoir and career catalogue *Building Illusion*, Diniz recalled his time with Victor Gruen Associates:



3.26
Chinese New Year at the World Trade
Center, New York City, 1964.
Illustrations by Carlos Diniz
for Minoru Yamasaki and Associates
Credit: *Building Illusion* (1992)

“During the approximately five year period at that firm I became totally immersed in not only drawing, but architectural design, planning and graphic presentation. By this time many other internationally noted architects and artists were strongly influencing my work—most certainly [Frank Lloyd] Wright and [Le] Corbusier but also the work of the artist Gordon Cullen of the British Journal, *Architectural Review*. While at Gruen much of the emphasis was on shopping centers as that was his current specialty. Then the firm was commissioned to design a new master plan for the city of Fort Worth, Texas, the far sighted and inspired Viennese architect produced a plan which was, in today’s terminology, “state of the art” and then some! To present this he decided to publish a report which would contain plans, renderings, everything that would constitute a total description of the proposed concept.”⁴⁵¹

One year after the release of Gruen’s Fort Worth plan, Diniz, who had studied at the Art Center School in Los Angeles and excelled among the talented ranks at Gruen, left to found his own architectural delineation firm. In his own practice, his firm went on to undertake commissions for architects including Frank Gehry, Cesar Pelli, Minoru Yamasaki, Welton Beckett, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, and Benjamin Thompson (with James Rouse). Diniz not only played a major hand in defining the unique vitality of the Fort Worth scheme, which he had adapted using the techniques of Gordon Cullen among others, but used his tremendous range of skills and delineation techniques to present the plan in a multi-dimensional way. The renderings done from the pedestrian’s vantage point

⁴⁵¹ Carlos Diniz. *Building Illusion: The Works of Carlos Diniz* (Tokyo Process Architecture Co., 1992), 12.

tend to take on a more sketch-like quality, with signage, kiosks, pigeons and public life playing out across the scene. The aerial transformations, meanwhile, are crisply detailed and specific, giving off the illusion of a complete architectural complex of which every detail and form has been carefully and exhaustively considered.⁴⁵²

Fort Worth was one of the most effective uses of an “entourage”⁴⁵³ scene showing a crowded pedestrian level view of a public space.⁴⁵⁴ Throughout his career, Diniz would gain recognition for crafting these scenes, including commissions for many of the festival marketplaces developed from the 1960s through the 1980s. These included drawings for Laclede’s Landing (St. Louis, 1967), Faneuil Hall Marketplace (Boston, 1974), Harborplace (Baltimore, 1978) and South Street Seaport (New York, 1980), the latter three of which were designed by Benjamin Thompson Associates and developed by the Rouse Company. Nicholas Olsberg describes Diniz’s “art of building illusion” as a “weaving together of the many disparate sensibilities of [his] tradition: the vitality captured along with documentary precision in Guardi’s Venice, Canaletto’s London or the cityscape of a Japanese print; the shadowy theater, the evocative and moody approaches that evoke space and shape with exaggerated lighting of Piranesi, John Michael Gandy and Hugh Ferriss; and the clarity and cubistic simplicity...in such illustrations as Otto Wagner’s for greater Vienna, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Wasmuth portfolio, Le Corbusier’s “Radial City” and Antonio Sant’Elia’s “New City.”⁴⁵⁵ In reference to Cullen’s influence, Olsberg suggests that Diniz adapted “Cullen’s language to the dynamism and scale of the American scene and fused it with the many traditions that preceded it.”⁴⁵⁶ He also notes that Diniz “turned away from the monumental uniformity of the first megaprojects toward a new ‘humanism,’ in which huge interventions were disguised by disparate scales and shapes, intimate covered walkways and active streetscapes.”⁴⁵⁷

The influence of Carlos Diniz in the Fort Worth scheme should not be overstated, of course. His role was to translate and enhance Gruen’s theatrical vision of the city. Diniz’s legacy as an illustrator, however,

452 It is important to note here that the Fort Worth renderings were the work of both Carlos Diniz and Ben Althen. The colorful main site plan was delineated by Althen, while Diniz was responsible for the aerial perspectives (as they bear his signature). Though the pedestrian eye-level perspectives are assumed to have been done by Diniz, there is no signature on those drawings, indicating either that they were in fact carried out by a team of illustrators or by Althen alone, given that he later is credited with drawing the main pedestrian perspectives of the Fresno Plan among others.

453 See Burden, *Architectural Delineation*, 112-116.

454 This is based on my comprehensive review of plans from the early 1900s through the mid-1970s.

455 Nicholas Olsberg, “For and Against Modernism: Los Angeles in the Illustrations of Carlos Diniz,” *The Modernism Magazine*, 11.4, 2008, 38.

456 Olsberg, 38.

457 *Ibid.*, 42.



reinforces both the assimilation of Gordon Cullen's townscape into American architecture and urbanism beginning in the 1950s and the farsighted ambitions of Victor Gruen, whose showmanship and peculiar blend of free-enterprise boosterism and European urbanity sympathies help create a new model for downtown that echoed through the 1980s.

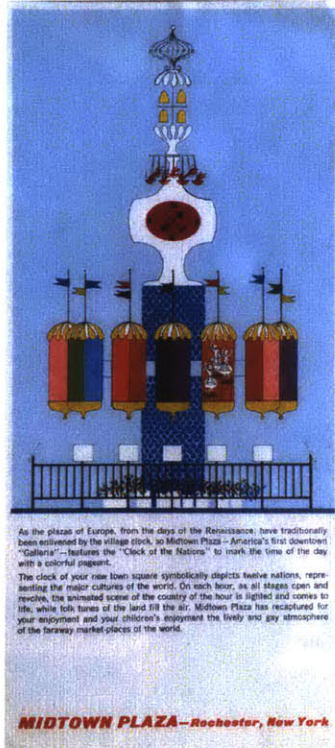
3.27

Southdale Center, Main Court.
Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1969
Victor Gruen Associates (Completed
1956)

Credit: G.E. Kidder Smith Image
Collection, MIT Libraries

VGA and Los Angeles Modern in the 1950s

In the 1950s, Gruen's Los Angeles office was a cauldron of talent and creativity. The firm incubated some of the top architects and design figures of its generation, including many who would go on to shape the dialogues of next half century. While Gruen's showmanship loomed large over the firm's identity, he both partnered with and attracted a corps of creative and talented designers during the 1950s and early 1960s. His partner and old friend from Vienna Rudi Baumfield was the firm's Head of Design. The Italian architect Edgardo Contini led engineering and transportation. Karl Van Leuven, who had been an animator at Disney and worked on *Dumbo* (1941) among other films, headed up the Detroit office and was in charge of development. Ben Southland and later the Swiss Beda Zwicker, whom Gruen had plucked from Sert's office in the early 1950s, led planning. Herman Guttman supervised the firm's shopping center projects.



3.28

The Clock of the Nations,
Midtown Plaza, Rochester, New
York (Completed 1962)
Designer: Gere Kavanaugh
Credit: Crawford Westbrook
Collection, MIT Libraries

On Gruen's staff were several designers who would later go on to illustrious careers of their own. The architect Frank Gehry worked for Victor Gruen Associates while a student at the University of Southern California before becoming full-time in 1954.⁴⁵⁸ Of his time at the firm, Gehry recalled, "the office had people like Fred Usher, Marion Sampler, Gere Kavanaugh, Kip Stewart, Greg Walsh, and John Gilchrest. It was a place that was interested in art and culture and design. Some of them came out of the [Ray and Charles] Eames office. There was a lot of energy..."⁴⁵⁹ While Gehry served as a project manager rather than a designer while at Gruen,⁴⁶⁰ his tenure at the firm sheds light on its open and creative culture in the Los Angeles Modern scene of the 1950s and 1960s. The firm's creative director, Marion Sampler, was one of the first African-American art directors in the country. Frederick A. Usher, who had worked for Charles and Ray Eames before joining Gruen, did the layout and typography for the Fort Worth Plan and later went on to a heralded career of his own. Gruen's storefront design work, while a smaller part of the portfolio later on, included a series of spectacularly imaginative interiors for the Cyril Magnin department store in the 1950s. Magnin's stores were designed "to suggest shops on a busy street, incorporating dramatic signage and wall graphics, fashionable furniture, and even handcrafted sculpture by artists such as Ruth Asawa and Claire Falkenstein."⁴⁶¹ Gere Kavanaugh, a female designer who worked first in firm's Detroit office before flourishing in LA designing store and shopping center interiors, also designed the famous Clock of the Nations at Midtown Plaza in Rochester. This culture of design permeated the firm's work and found expression in its downtown plans.⁴⁶²

The layout and graphic design at Victor Gruen Associates reflected the latest typographical styles as well. Notable is the use of Craw Clarendon typeface, which was revived by the typographer Freeman Crew in the early 1950s, in both the Fort Worth plan and the firm's shopping center brochures. Typographical styles had played an equally significant role as in

458 Gehry worked at Gruen for two stints, first as a student in the early through mid-1950s and then from 1958-1960, after leaving the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he had been pursuing a degree in city planning, and a brief tenure working for the firm of William Pereira and Charles Luckman. See Paul Goldberger. *Building Art: the Life and Work of Frank Gehry* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015).

459 John Pastier. "Q&A: Gehry at 80," *The Architect's Newspaper*, March 24, 2009, <http://archpaper.com/news/articles.asp?id=3321#.VwLx6KY0oiE>.

460 Among the projects that Gehry worked on were the Charles River Park Houses in Boston's West End and Midtown Plaza in Rochester, New York. While at Gruen, he was apparently known as a housing expert. In 1973, Gehry would work with Gruen Associates, James Rouse, and Ernst Hahn on the Santa Monica Place project, which built on Gruen's Santa Monica Pedestrian Mall Plan from 1960.

461 See Wendy Kaplan and Staci Steinberger. "The Dissemination of California Design 1945-65," in *California Design, 1930-1966: Living in a Modern Way*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 308.

462 See Jeremy Aynsley. "Developing a Language of Vision: Graphic Design in California," in *California Design, 1930-1966: Living in a Modern Way*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 280.

the early 1950s work of Gordon Cullen, who with Nicolette Gray, adopted “fat-faced” and Egyptian letter types as part of an effort to coordinate lettering styles for “printed ephemera” and advertising on the South Bank of London.⁴⁶³ According to Paul Rennie, the revival of these bold serif typefaces marked “an end to the first period of modernism associated with unity, functionalism and monumentality, and a beginning of a period of lighter-spirited, more variegated architecture and design.”⁴⁶⁴ The cover of Nicolette Gray’s book *Lettering on Buildings* (1960) was designed by Gordon Cullen in his townscape vernacular and echoed the typographical sensibilities employed by those at Gruen in the 1950s.

Though well known for the scale and creativity of its design, Gruen’s *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* proved just as pioneering in its graphic design and rendering. In the design-rich culture of mid-1950s Los Angeles, Gruen’s talented staff set a new paradigm for the presentation of the city plan. The publicity around Gruen’s main renderings and the dissemination of the plan itself produced countless imitators, such that plans for Charles Center in Baltimore, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and other cities produced over the ensuing years could easily be mistaken for Gruen plans.

Gruen’s Epitome District

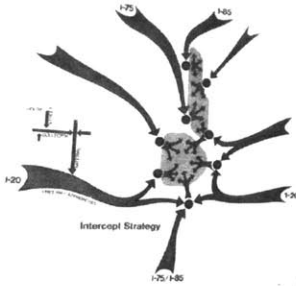
While *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* set a paradigm in plan making for the core, its influence as a design idea was equal, if not greater than its influence as a graphic style. Reflecting upon the plan in 1980, Grady Clay wrote of Gruen:

“His position was defensive. The old city needed to be defended against its newest enemy, the automobile. Later...he grew more explicit; it was necessary to set up ‘an inner defense line’ plus ‘two further fortifications systems—to repel invasion of mechanical hordes onto those areas where they create havoc.’...in his public speeches, Gruen exhibited plans of medieval cities, including his native Vienna, bristling with walled forts, bounded by moats and fields of fire for defense. This was eloquent and powerful stuff to which downtowners responded in droves. Commissions for redoing downtowns poured in to the Gruen firm from all over: Fresno, Stamford, Paterson, Cincinnati, Manhattan, Rochester, Norfolk, Santa Monica, Vancouver, et al...His proposals were widely published; they became official doctrine in hundreds of city plans of the 1960’s, and were built into the townscapes of the 1970’s. If anything had become a major new epitome district of the American city by 1972, it was Gruen’s.

Gruen thus came to stand for twentieth-century rational solutions to large-scale urban problems. His solutions were made up of large units, managed

⁴⁶³ Paul Rennie. “Fat Faces All Around: Lettering and the Festival Style,” in *Twentieth Century Architecture 5: Festival of Britain*, ed. Elain Harwood and Alan Powers, *The Journal of the Twentieth Century Society*, 2001. This is in reference to Cullen’s Bankside Regained project.

⁴⁶⁴ Rennie, 115.



3.29

“Intercept Strategy”

Grady Clay, *Close-Up: How to Read the American City*, 1973

by large organizations, executed by big-scale finance and construction tactics—epitomizing the way twentieth-century American cities were heading. In contrast, the breaks we examined earlier represented the nineteenth-century mode of city expansion by means of simplistic, repetitive gridiron pattern into which small operators, single-lot buyers, individual homeowners, and builders could fit. In a comparatively short time, from grid to Gruen, a major shift had taken place.”⁴⁶⁵

Clay referred to Gruen’s plan as the “epitome district” of the 1960s and 1970s. An “epitome district,” he wrote, “is a brief statement expressing the essence of something, a short presentation of a large topic. A city’s epitome districts are crammed with clues that trigger our awareness to the larger scene—things around the corner, processes out of sight, history all but covered up. They stand for other things; they generate metaphors; they are the sort of places that, ideally, help us get it all together.”⁴⁶⁶ Gruen’s epitome district consisted of three major compelling arguments. The first was the plan itself, a large format brochure that served as an advertisement for Gruen’s big ideas for “City X.” The second argument was for the pedestrianization of downtown, which transformed streets into plazas and indulged in carnival fantasies and World’s Fair kitsch. The third argument was essentially a large-scale transportation vision that entailed the complete separation of pedestrians and traffic as a form-giving principle for city design. Gruen’s transportation vision, as articulated in his compelling vision of the ring road and the terminal garage, became the model for urban reconstruction during the Interstate Era.

Loop Roads and the Interstate Highway Act

The vision of a loop highway or boulevard encircling the downtown was hardly new by 1956. Loop roads had been a traffic planning strategy going back to the early 1900s and were featured in plans for Buffalo, Boston, Cincinnati, as well as many other cities. As Elihu Rubin documents, Boston, one of the first cities to begin postwar highway construction, starting with its Central Artery Loop in 1952, had proposed a loop as early as 1923, a proposal which was reiterated in Robert Whitten’s 1930 Thoroughfare Plan for Boston, and again in the 1948 Master Highway Plan for Metropolitan Boston by De Leuw, Cather and Company.⁴⁶⁷ Ring road traffic distribution had figured prominently in many of the schemes put forth by Ladislav Segoe in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as well as plans by other leading traffic engineering firms, such as Alan M. Voorhees & Associates and Wilbur Smith & Company. While loops represented a

465 Clay, *Close-Up*, 61.

466 *Ibid.*, 38.

467 Rubin, 98-100.

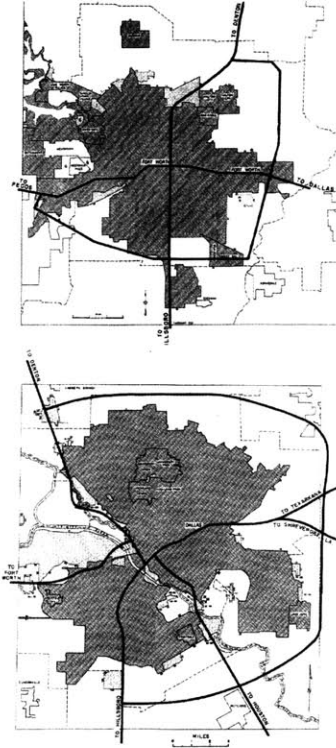
widespread solution to the congestion problem of cities, they also figured prominently in shopping center plans, which used access distribution and rings roads to funnel cars from major roads and highways into massive surface parking lots without creating gridlock at the entry points.

While Gruen had always expressed an ambiguous position towards decentralization, his position on the automobile remained firmly negative throughout his career. He wrote frequently of the need to “tame the motorcar”⁴⁶⁸ and referred to cars as “mechanical hordes.”⁴⁶⁹ In spite of his rhetoric, his strategy for combatting the excesses and externalities of automobility was accommodation as opposed to rejection. In *Shopping Towns USA*, Gruen stated that it was imperative for architects and designers to both understand and manipulate traffic planning. “In spite of its specialized nature,” he said, “it should not be assumed that traffic planning is a field entirely reserved for the specialist, the traffic engineer, or the traffic expert. Basic traffic planning concerns the planning team as a whole and the architect in particular.”⁴⁷⁰ Gruen’s keen attention to traffic was reflected by the fact that his partner in the firm, who presented the Fort Worth Plan by his side, was the engineer Edgardo Contini. Contini, in fact, had been the partner-in-charge at Fort Worth and played an incredibly important role in the firm’s growth throughout the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁷¹ An Italian engineer described by one paper as Gruen’s “handsome, eager, and dynamic” sidekick,⁴⁷² Contini had been a member of the firm Smith, Jones, and Contini, which was well known for its Los Angeles housing design prior to his joining Gruen’s team.

It is important to note that while Gruen’s plan for Fort Worth preceded the passage of the Interstate Highway Act in 1956, there were plans for road construction in place at Fort Worth and many other cities by the 1950s. The passage of the Highway Act had been a priority of President Dwight D. Eisenhower since he took office in 1953. Eisenhower had experienced firsthand the terrible state of the country’s roads when he took part in the Transcontinental Motor Convoy of 1919. The Convoy, which had roughly followed the route of the Lincoln Highway (America’s

3.30, 3.31

Fort Worth (top) and Dallas Urban Interstate Highways “The Yellow Book,” 1955.



468 Gruen, *Heart of Our Cities*, 212.

469 *Ibid.*, 214.

470 Victor Gruen and Larry Smith. *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers* (New York, NY: Rheinhold Publishing, 1960), 115.

471 In 1950, Gruen invited Karl Van Leuven, Edgardo Contini, and Rudi Baumfield to join him in forming Victor Gruen Associates. Contini led engineering, Baumfield design, and Van Leuven, client relations and development (Wall, 75). Baumfield and Gruen knew one another from their schooling in Vienna, while Van Leuven had been an animator and cartoonist for Disney before shifting into architecture. It is interesting to note that Gruen, Baumfield, and Contini were all Jewish. Ben Southland joined the firm to lead Planning in 1956. Herman Guttman became a partner and head of production in 1957 and Beda Zwicker became the partner in charge of the New York Office in 1963.

472 Hardwick, 170.

first transcontinental road) from Washington D.C. to Oakland, California, suffered from frequent breakdowns and obstacles that reinforced the critical need for a national road network. Though federal aid for road construction had passed before, notably in the 1920s, nothing of this scale had yet been tried. The Eisenhower administration drafted legislation for the bill in 1954, which was then rejected by the House and Senate in 1955 due to a disagreement over financing. The act's passage was eventually engineered by gaining the crucial support of big-city mayors, who believed that urban freeways were an essential part of the solution to reversing downtown decline. To ensure the act's passage, the highway lobby, led by the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO), had to add significantly more urban routes to the interstate system, which were eventually compiled in the 1955 "yellow book," including 100 metropolitan area interstate plans, distributed to Congress. The map book designated loop roads surrounding most major downtowns and metropolitan regions and as a further olive branch to urban interests, the law specified that local traffic needs would merit equal consideration to interstate commerce in the determination of these routes.⁴⁷³ Of the 42,500 miles passed as part of the Act, cities had one-fifth of the total highway mileage. The bill provided cities with 90 percent federal financing, with total funding to cities for roadway construction dwarfing that of the urban renewal legislation passed only two years earlier.

The scale of roadway construction proposed for Fort Worth was on par with the anticipated impact of the Interstate program in cities, precipitating what Marshall Berman would refer to as "the expressway world." In remaking the entire city as a pedestrian mall ringed by a fortified system of garages to prevent traffic from entering the center, however, the plan went far beyond anything traffic consultants like De Leuw Cather or Voorhees had envisioned. Gruen's plans subjugated the objectives of traffic planning to the imperative of retail and, secondarily, the joy of the pedestrian. Indeed, the absolute horizontal segregation of traffic in Fort Worth could only be compared in scope to the vision put forth in Corbett's traffic proposals for a vertically segregated metropolis in *The Regional Plan of New York and its Environs* in the 1920s.

By 1950, the parking garage had also begun to come into its own as a typology downtown. A February 1953 article in *Architectural Forum* described that year as "Garage Year" due to the nearly 75 million dollars in private capital entering the garage field.⁴⁷⁴ The article pointed to changing building codes that made multi-level garages cheaper to construct,

473 Frieden and Sagalyn, 21.

474 "Garages Grow Up," *Architectural Forum*, 98:2 (1953), 120.

streamlined designs with modular steel units, and new mechanical garage technologies that allowed for efficient stacking. The underground garage built below Union Square in San Francisco in the early 1940s and the new, low-cost open deck garages then under construction provided downtown retailers and businessmen with optimism that the parking woes of the previous decades might finally begin to ebb.

Yet behind the parking progress of the 1950s, a battle waged between those who felt that parking should be the responsibility of the municipality and those who felt that it should be shepherded by private enterprise.⁴⁷⁵ Those who called for public construction and management of parking garages saw it as a “natural extension of the city’s street system”⁴⁷⁶ and believed that eminent domain could be used to build parking lots where they were most needed (such as at the off ramp from the freeway). The private argument followed that the city going into the parking business would be sure to create conflicts between merchants benefitting unequally from the garage locations, cause the taxpayer to be burdened in the long run, and could be better orchestrated through a plan rather than a direct municipal expenditures.⁴⁷⁷ The experience of cities to date had been diverse. Evanston, Illinois and Grand Rapids, Michigan had both successfully raised funds to build and operate public garages. Baltimore, New Brunswick, and Indianapolis had done just the opposite, making loans or creating incentives for private entrepreneurs to handle the parking problem cooperatively.

For all of his rhetoric on “the philosophy of private enterprise,”⁴⁷⁸ Gruen’s scheme for Fort Worth seemed to tilt more in the direction of the former strategy than the latter. In forming a Central District Parking Authority “to construct and operate parking facilities or license private operators to do the same,” Gruen opened the door to oppositional forces that would eventually sink his plan.

The Gruen Plan for Fort Worth: an Epilogue

In 1956, the Gruen Plan briefly put the city of Fort Worth on the map. Even the utility baron J.B. Thomas, the unlikely public patron who had commissioned the report, relished his moment in the spotlight. In spite of its visionary qualities and allusions to private enterprise, the Gruen plan’s \$150 million dollar price tag relied on extensive public financing that was not quick to materialize.⁴⁷⁹ The plan had the support of the City Council,

475 “Garages Grow Up,” 124.

476 Ibid, Ibid.

477 Ibid, Ibid.

478 Gruen, *Fort Worth*, 32.

479 Hardwick, 187.

however, who pushed for two bills in the state legislature that allow the city to “condemn buildings, sell off property, and oversee development, as well to operate parking garages.”⁴⁸⁰ After the plan’s release, a delegation from Fort Worth including Thomas, the Mayor, the Chamber of Commerce President, and the city manager, lobbied the Texas State Highway Commission to alter existing plans for an elevated East-West highway in favor of a depressed road, to no avail.

At the time, Texas was one of thirteen states that had yet to pass urban renewal legislation authorized by the federal government. As the bill approached the legislature, local papers informally named it the ‘Gruen Bill.’⁴⁸¹ It failed by a single vote out of concern over property rights expressed by certain members of the Texas Senate. After two setbacks, plan supporters reassembled, this time, to pass a parking bill that would authorize the construction of Gruen’s massive terminal garages by giving cities in Texas the ability to build and operate public garages.⁴⁸²

When the parking bill came to the floor, the plan’s ambitions really stalled. The president of the Chamber of Commerce, who had formerly been a booster of the Gruen Plan, suddenly opposed it, seemingly under pressure from George Thompson, a bank president who owned several downtown garages.⁴⁸³ Thompson cited a slippery slope into “state-sponsored socialism” and worried about the prospect of the city having “a monopoly of downtown garage business.”⁴⁸⁴ The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reported that “the key measure for Fort Worth’s Gruen Plan of downtown modernization was killed.”⁴⁸⁵ As M. Jeffrey Hardwick states, “With these three legislative defeats, the Gruen plan proponents had no legal authority or money to build their dream city.”⁴⁸⁶ “The Fort Worth Plan lived and died on issues of mobility and access—restructuring movement and parking relative to the vested interest of downtown landowners,” wrote Alex Wall. “Ironically, despite the intensive studies of parking and traffic, parking lot and garage owners helped defeat the project.”⁴⁸⁷ In a foreshadowing of sentiments that would much later run counter to the pedestrian malls, long after its demise, George Thompson, who rallied against the plan, reportedly said, “People like to do business where there are people and traffic, and where there is the sound appearance of commercial activity. I don’t want to do business in a botanical garden.”⁴⁸⁸

480 Hardwick, 187.

481 Ibid, 188.

482 Ibid, 188-89.

483 Ibid, 189.

484 Ibid, Ibid.

485 “Gruen Parking Bill Dies; Slum Plan Given Boost,” *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, April 30, 1957.

486 Hardwick, 189.

487 Wall, 134.

488 Ibid, Ibid.

Fort Worth: Temporal Reading

In September 1959, after the Fort Worth plan had imploded over internal conflicts, a downturn in business and political enthusiasm, and rancor over entrenched parking interests, the city watched a number of smaller cities, including Springfield, Oregon; Toledo, Ohio; and Kalamazoo, Michigan experiment with pedestrianization. In response to these temporary malls, and perhaps disdainful of having lost their fleeting moment in the spotlight of downtown renewal, Fort Worth decided to experiment with a three-day trial for a six-block downtown mall on Houston Street. The city council altered city zoning regulations to permit merchants to put planters in front of their shops and created a mechanism that would permit the closure of a street downtown. Yet the trial, which was mocked by businessmen for its carnival kitsch, lasted only three days and Fort Worth would, despite its close association with the pedestrian mall, never build one downtown.⁴⁸⁹

Over the following ten years, Fort Worth would continue to cede its strategic position and trade area to Dallas. After the Gruen Plan, the city released two subsequent plans for downtown in 1965 and 1966, one by the City Planning Commission and the other by the Fort Worth Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).⁴⁹⁰ These plans were followed by a plan for the central business district by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin in 1971.

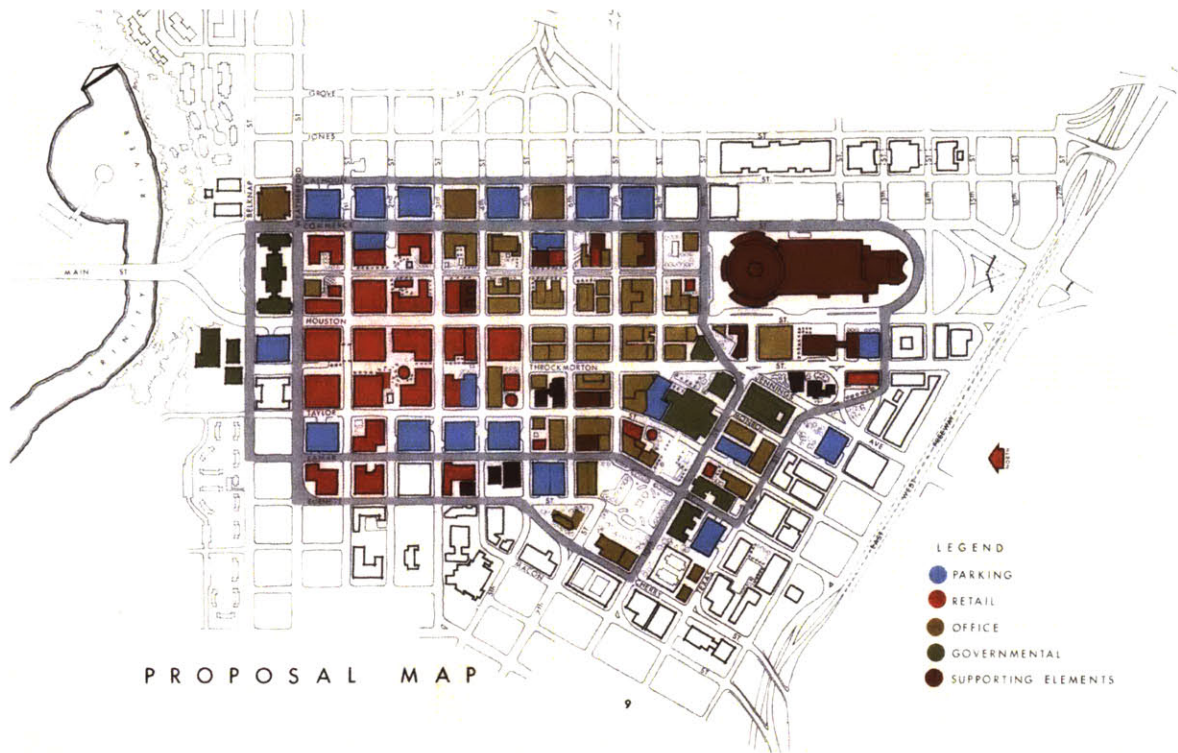
A Proposal for the Core Area 1966

Fort Worth's 1966 AIA plan, *A Proposal for the Core Area, Fort Worth, Texas*⁴⁹¹ offers a compelling comparison to the Gruen Plan. Visually, the plan sought to achieve the same graphic clarity as the 1956 plan, yet departed from many of its of its central recommendations. The definition of the core area, delineated in a black and white aerial photograph, shifted to include a smaller subsection of downtown, defined as a core and a frame

489 Hardwick, 197. Also see Jeanne Lowe. "What's Happened in Fort Worth?" *Architectural Forum* 110.5 (1959): 136-139.

490 The pattern of plans performed and accepted by outside agencies and groups was one of the most unexpected and surprising findings of this investigation. That external groups could publish plans that would later be adopted or become so closely associated with the city perhaps reflected the uncertain role of planning in the 1950s in relation to capital. Especially where outside associations or business councils wanted to control decision-making, the external planning apparatus had distinct advantages.

491 *A Proposal for the Core Area, Fort Worth, Texas*. (Fort Worth, TX: American Institute of Architects and the Fort Worth City Planning Department, 1966).



3.32
 Site Plan. *A Proposal for the Core of Fort Worth* (1966), American Institute of Architects and Fort Worth City Planning Department. Courtesy of MIT Libraries

area.⁴⁹² Like the Gruen plan, the AIA effort used a watermark to denote the central business district's image. That diagram, however, was a latticework of streets coming together rather than a singular unit, evidence of another departure from the initial totality of the scheme.

Rather than end with a chapter on implementation, as Gruen had done, the 1966 plan begins with a chapter on implementation. Each chapter transition highlighted an illustrated perspective, often a bustling pedestrian plaza or iconic building delineated by a different member of the architects' consortium. The site plan for the downtown was articulated as a basic land use map, of which the most prominent elements are the county courthouse and a massive proposed convention center almost four blocks in length. Perspectives drawn for the proposal nonetheless repeat the fanciful elements that had made Gruen's plan popular, including small flying machines, elevated walkways, and a carnival atmosphere of kiosks, foliage, and fountains—an essentially pedestrian experience. Though the

492 The "core-frame" concept of the central business district emerged in the mid-1950s. In Horwood and Boyce's *Studies of the Central Business District and Urban Freeway Development* (1959), the authors defined the concept as such: "The central area is divided into two major regions: 'an inner core characterized by intensive land use, extended vertical scale, limited horizontal scale and change, concentrated daytime population, focus on intracity mass transit, center of specialized functions, and internally conditioned boundaries; and an outer frame characterized by semi-intensive land use, prominent functional subregions, extended horizontal scale, unlinked functional subregions and externally conditioned boundaries.'" See Clyde E. Browning, "Recent Studies of Central Business Districts," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 27.1 (1961): 82-87.

site plan for downtown did not highlight a pedestrian mall as an organizing concept for the proposal, the plan nevertheless proposed to turn Main Street and portions of two other streets into “pedestrian ways.” It also explicitly cited the pedestrian as the main user of the core area and sought to “facilitate the countless person-to-person contacts that must take place daily in business activity.”⁴⁹³

Though the 1966 plan paid homage to the Gruen plan in its language and attitude, the proposal for the core itself marked an incredible downscaling of ambitions from a decade earlier. Even the primary diagram calling for pedestrianization amounted to little more than a loosely concocted bubble diagram floating over some of the downtown shopping streets.⁴⁹⁴ In spite of its diminished ambitions, the AIA plan touted the same basic principles that Gruen had put forth, using “a better core tomorrow” as a key phrase and even citing an intercept strategy for downtown in reference to traffic planning. The most detailed elements of the plan, perhaps reflecting a strategy among AIA members to use it as a catalyst for new architectural work,⁴⁹⁵ were its proposals for a new retail center, government complex, and convention center. At the time, the convention center had already been approved and would eventually be built, along with a variety of downtown office buildings, though many of these were not constructed until the 1980s.⁴⁹⁶

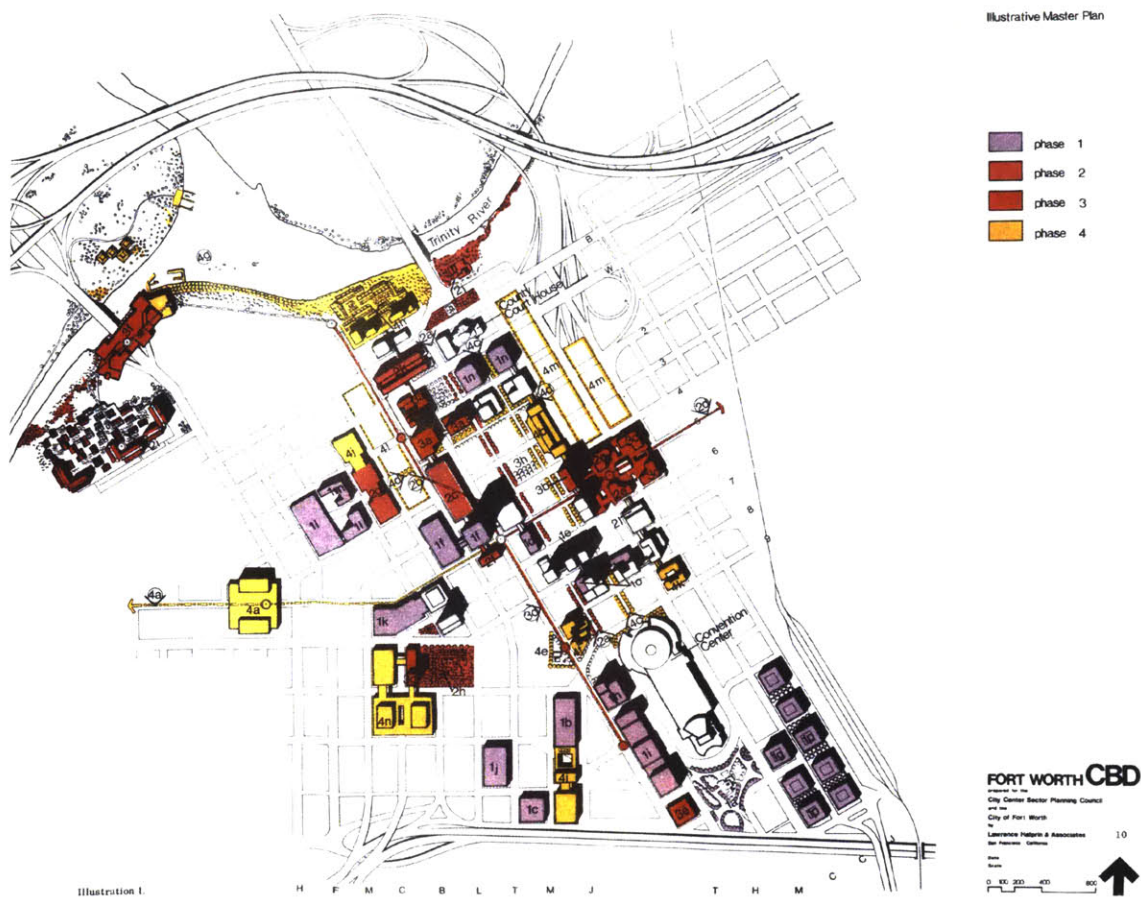
While a pedestrian mall was never built in Fort Worth, a modified version of the scheme presented in the 1966 plan was constructed on Main Street between the convention center and the county courthouse, with a large pedestrian plaza called Sundance Square at the halfway point. In spite of being one of the first cities to provide a clear vision for a circumferential highway encircling downtown, Fort Worth never built a highway loop. Instead, a triangular interchange was built around Butler Place, an area that had been cleared in the late 1930s by the Public Works Administration and served as one of the nation’s first large scale public housing projects. Though a number of perimeter parking garages were eventually constructed, including a fortress-like edifice at the corner of Texas and Lamar streets, most of the lots remained surface parking and were interspersed throughout the downtown area.

493 *A Proposal for the Core Area, Fort Worth, Texas*. 13.

494 *Ibid.*, 15.

495 This strategy had already been tried successfully in Knoxville as part of the Market Square Mall project of 1961.

496 Two skyscrapers, the 40-story Burnett Plaza Building and the 30-story Landmark Tower had been built in 1961 and 1957, respectively.



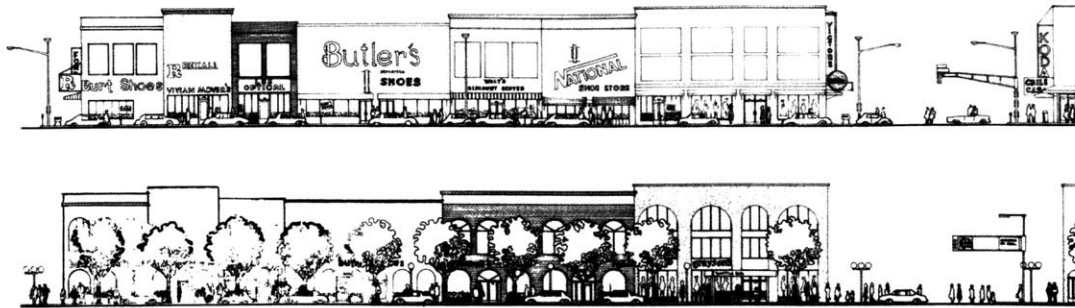
3.33
 Site Plan. *Fort Worth CBD Sector Report* (1971), Lawrence Halprin Associates. Courtesy of MIT Libraries.

Lawrence Halprin: CBD Sector Report 1971

The landscape architect Lawrence Halprin’s 1971 *Fort Worth: CBD Sector Report*, meanwhile, though published only five years after the AIA plan, signified a significant departure from the precepts established in the Gruen scheme. Halprin, a landscape architect, had designed Minneapolis’ Nicollet Mall (opened in 1967) and Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco (1964), as well as a partially implemented scheme for San Francisco’s Market Street (1962, 1967). While his work for Nicollet Mall had drawn acclaim, the plan for the transit mall had initially been drawn up by Barton-Aschman Associates in the late 1950s, an idea they had sketched in their earlier work on the Chicago Perimeter Plan of 1953.

Halprin was originally invited to Fort Worth by the city’s “Streams and Valleys Committee,” which was dedicated to reclaiming the Trinity River and had released a preliminary plan for that initiative in 1970.⁴⁹⁷ Having been brought to Fort Worth to undertake the river plan, Halprin was subsequently engaged to author a report for the city’s central business

497 Alison Hirsch. *City Choreographer: Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 101.



district and assist the Texas Highway Department on a Freeway Corridor Selection Plan in tandem with the river plan.⁴⁹⁸ According to Alison Hirsch, whereas “the Gruen plan...called for a freeway loop circling the CBD, which would be entirely pedestrianized as a shopping and commercial center. The Halprin Plan sought a balance between pedestrian and automobile networks and, unlike the Gruen plan, was based on existing regional ecology and urban networks.”⁴⁹⁹ The plan was also the first in which Halprin used his “Take Part” participatory workshop, which became a standard practice for the firm later on.⁵⁰⁰ Halprin’s plan proposed six major projects: a circumferential *surface* traffic loop system around the CBD, an off-street parking program; a mall on Houston Street (the same street that had hosted a temporary mall in 1959); an enclosed pedestrian network (modeled on Minneapolis’ skyway network); major retail development; and the Trinity River Overlook and Riverfront Park.⁵⁰¹ The first five of these recommendations had been iterated in the Gruen plan and the AIA scheme. Here these were adapted to a less disruptive scale in the environmentally conscious early 1970s. Diagrams for the loop called for a pair of one-way streets that could offer the same basic impact as the loop highway.⁵⁰² Structured parking was scaled down considerably. The Houston Street Mall called for widened sidewalks and a narrowing of the street from four to two lanes, but did not remove traffic. More significant interventions included a multi-block shopping center on the eastern edge of downtown and a series of residential, commercial and recreational developments straddling the Trinity River. Perhaps based on his experience

3.34

Storefront Modernization.
Fort Worth CBD Sector Report
 (1971), Lawrence Halprin
 Associates. Courtesy of MIT
 Libraries.

498 Hirsch, *Ibid.*

499 *Ibid.*, 102.

500 For a discussion of the “Take Part” workshop held in Fort Worth. See Hirsch, *City Choreographer*, 210-215.

501 Lawrence Halprin & Associates. *Fort Worth CBD Sector Report*. (Fort Worth, TX: City Center Sector Planning Council, 1971), 8, 12.

502 Halprin, *Fort Worth*, 9.

in Minneapolis, Halprin's plan placed far more emphasis on elevated and subterranean passageways for pedestrians as well as on a planned regional transit system that would provide access through downtown to the region.

Formally, Halprin's plan eschewed elaborate renderings in favor of a largely colorless, official report. Departing from the conventions of earlier Fort Worth plans, it used a clean Helvetica typeface, as well as a notational language reminiscent of the environmental mapping techniques of Kevin Lynch in the early 1960s. It offered an extensive and diverse pallet of options for downtown stakeholders, reflecting the plan's uncertain place at a transition point in American urban planning. The plan mixed environmental analyses,⁵⁰³ sketches rendered in a style similar to those of the San Francisco *Urban Design Plan* (1971) led by Allan Jacobs and published the same year,⁵⁰⁴ as well as the more conventional sections and diagrams like those in the plans of Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (to be discussed in Chapter Five).⁵⁰⁵ It even included a series of streetscape facade elevations for "remodeling and sign control" on the Houston Street Mall, echoing those of storefront modernization era.⁵⁰⁶ These drawings, more than the others, provide evidence a clear break that had emerged in design by the early 1970s. The prominent and variegated signage, itself derived from earlier storefront modernization campaigns in the 1930s and 1940s, was here reconfigured into a more consistent pattern whose defining element was a series of simple arches. The elevation hints towards historic preservation, yet retains a conservative modern materiality with muted signs and lush vegetation.

While Halprin's work on the central business district of Fort Worth provided an important framework for the city's future, little of the plan was implemented. Halprin's signature achievement was his isolated work at Heritage Park Plaza on a bluff overlooking the Trinity River, which he designed in the late 1970s and finally opened in 1980. Other elements of the plan, including elevated walkways and pedestrian improvements, were implemented piecemeal, though its impact may be considered diffuse overall. Its principal significance lay in the articulation of changing norms and cultures of city planning and design in the early 1970s, as well as its evidence of entrenched formal strategies that persisted in spite of those changes.

503 Halprin, *Fort Worth*, 38.

504 *Ibid.*, 47.

505 *Ibid.*, 55-56.

506 *Ibid.*, 107-108.

Conclusion

In spite of its daring and visionary proposition, *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* demonstrated several inherent contradictions in Victor Gruen's approach to downtown, which would come to haunt him over the course of his career. First, in simultaneously sponsoring suburban shopping centers and downtown retail-based revitalization, Gruen overlooked, or at least failed to anticipate, the degree to which these two things were indeed oppositional forces. Second, as revealed by the debates over the parking authority legislation, the scope of his vision could stand at odds with the spirit of free enterprise that he rhetorically embraced. The expertise that he had developed for planning and designing shopping centers at the periphery or modernizing a storefront downtown were poorly suited to the complex, granular nature of downtown ownership and stakeholders.

In the mid-1950s, cities were still struggling to figure out how to effectively use urban renewal funds, let alone interstate highway money. Gruen's massive multi-level terminal garages would be scaled down in his later schemes, an acknowledgment that the cost and risk associated with these structures belied their capacity to ensure a workable scheme. As a result, few of Gruen's later plans would match the totality of Fort Worth. Lastly, Gruen's complete pedestrianization of downtown, its most awe-inspiring element and the one that put Fort Worth into the realm of Disney and World's Fairs, stood at odds with the politics of traffic and parking. Merchants, however much they longed for their customers to enjoy a pedestrian shopping experience that could rival the suburbs, remained affixed to the prospect of a "Janus-like" arrangement that allowed for the best of both worlds—convenient parking out back and a utopian pedestrian environment out front. Gruen's Fort Worth plan relied on a system of sub-surface loading docks and passageways that might have equated to a Corbett-like multi-level city, but their expense and the challenges exhibited at Fort Worth, indicated that such a scheme was indeed utopian in nature, more akin to Broadacre City than Rockefeller Center. Over the next decade, Victor Gruen Associates would plunge into a frenzy of commissions that tried to realize the basic tenets advertised for Fort Worth. Over the course of the next decade, from Fresno, California to Paterson, New Jersey, the firm would forge a definitive vision for downtown amid its otherwise persistent decline.

CHAPTER FOUR





FROM FORT WORTH TO FRESNO

The Pedestrian Mall Comes of Age

“...where surgery is needed, aspirin tablets are of little avail.”

—City Manager, Grand Haven, Michigan, 1959⁵⁰⁷

In 1956, Victor Gruen’s *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow* precipitated a paradigm shift in downtown plan making and renewal. As Fort Worth squabbled over the plan, however, Gruen catapulted to the forefront of American city planning in the late 1950s, as cities from St. Paul and Green Bay to Santa Monica and Fresno called on him to rethink their downtowns. The late 1950s and the early 1960s would prove in hindsight to be Victor Gruen’s moment in the limelight. Every city wanted a “Gruen Plan” and between 1956 and 1966, Victor Gruen Associates produced plans for almost 50 central business districts.⁵⁰⁸ Yet the impact of Gruen’s influential scheme reverberated well beyond his firm’s peak activity. Nearly every major municipality in the United States either planned for or actually built a pedestrian precinct over the ensuing twenty-five year period and Gruen’s work signaled the decisive shift from the parking-and-civic center plans of the prior decade to the downtown malls and mixed-use developments that would characterize downtown development thereafter.

Chapter 4 follows the trajectory of Victor Gruen’s Fort Worth scheme, as it was adapted to countless cities around the United States. The first part of this chapter looks at the experimental or temporary mall as a phenomenon that began in the late 1950s, as well as the first permanent pedestrian malls that were actually built. The second part focuses on the downtown plans that followed the prototype Gruen established at his firm in the 1950s, including a discussion of the results of an extensive content analysis and plan coding exercise. This discussion will then transition into

4.1

(opposite)

Fulton Mall, Fresno. 1960s.

Credit: Shorpy

507 “A Shopper’s Mall—The Grand Haven Story,” *Michigan Municipal Review*, September 1958, 211 as quoted in Weiss, “The Downtown Mall Experiment,” 71 n20.

508 This total is drawn from VGA documents in the archive of Crawford Westbrook at MIT Institutional Archives. It includes both US and international work. Box 10.

a plan reading of Gruen's *Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation* (1960), ultimately realized as the Fulton Mall in 1964.

Pedestrian Malls: 1956-1961

A Half-hearted Experiment: The Temporary Pedestrian Mall

"They are spatially limited, poorly executed, promotional measures based on a complete misunderstanding of the whole problem. They are the direct outcome of the desire which most downtown interests share to do quickly and cheaply something spectacular and to rely on patent medicines rather than thorough treatment."

—Victor Gruen, 1959⁵⁰⁹

In his plans and speeches following the release of his Fort Worth plan, Victor Gruen repeatedly criticized the tendency of cities to create experimental malls rather than work towards the implementation of long range plans. "Like precocious children,"⁵¹⁰ complained Gruen, these cities had effected change "only by subtraction," rather than as "part of an integrated planning effort which will create improvement of public transportation, better perimeter accessibility for private automobiles, the establishment of terminal facilities in appropriate locations, and the enlivening of roads formerly devoted to automobile traffic by new features and events."⁵¹¹ He viewed these short-term fixes as not only "ineffective," but potentially "dangerous with respect to long-range planning efforts"⁵¹² and only "the result of promotional and advertising mentality, with the aim of creating sensations...like dollar days, parades, etc."⁵¹³

In spite of Gruen's consternation at the perversion and diminution of his grand ideas, experimental malls became a fad among cities in the late 1950s. The first and perhaps most widely recognized of these was a 10-day trial conducted in Springfield, Oregon from August 15-24, 1957 on the city's Main Street. Springfield, a city of 13,500, had a business area of four blocks that petered into strip development on either side of U.S. Highway 126.⁵¹⁴ The mall was the brainchild of local architect Donald H. Lutes, who had, in seeking a lessor for one of his commercial

4.2

opposite page

Shoppers' Paradise, Experimental Mall. Springfield, Oregon, August 1957. Architects: Donald Lutes and John Amundson.

509 Victor Gruen, "Urbia for Urbanites" *National Civic Review*, December 1959, 573 as quoted in Shirley Weiss, "The Downtown Mall Experiment," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 30:1 (1964): 69.

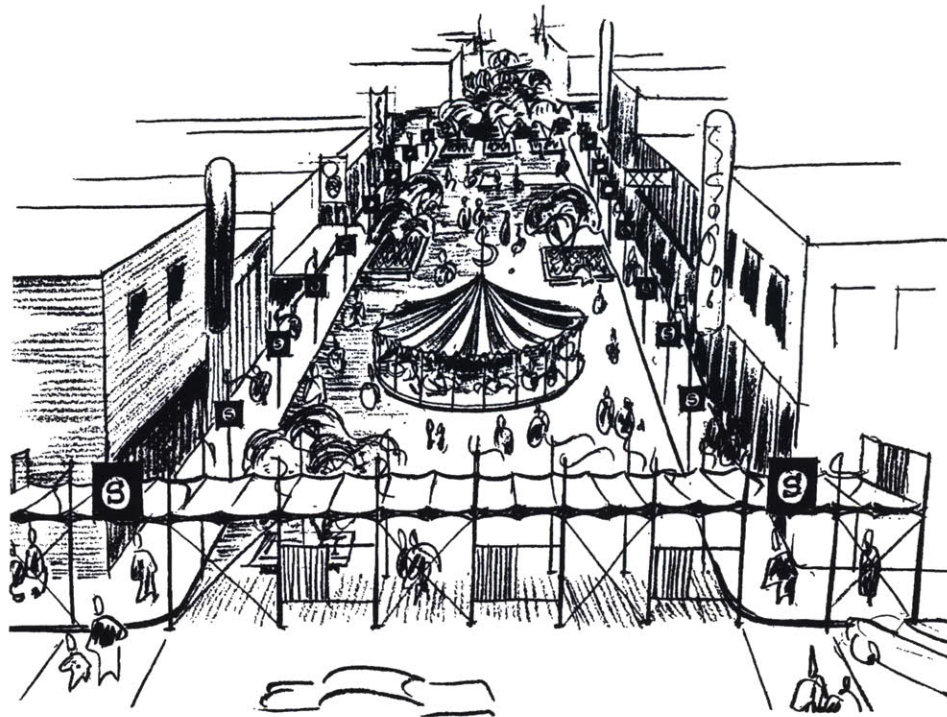
510 "Interview with Victor Gruen. *City Planner*," U.S. News and World Report, June 20, 1960, 87.

511 Victor Gruen, "The Emerging Urban Pattern," *Progressive Architecture* 40.7 (1959): 150-151.

512 Victor Gruen, Speech before the 65th Annual National Conference on Government of the Municipal League, on November 18, 1958 in Springfield Massachusetts.

513 Gruen, *Ibid.*

514 Norman Johnston, "A City Takes the First Step: An Experiment for Renewing a Central Business District," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 24:1 (1958): 11.



properties, undertaken a study of sales volumes in the city and discovered “strikingly lower per capita dollar expenditures” compared to Eugene and other Oregon cities.⁵¹⁵ After undertaking a survey of shopping centers around the country, Lutes and the planner John Amundson Jr., devised a plan for reviving Springfield’s prospects, called “Shoppers’ Paradise.”⁵¹⁶ The proposal consisted of four principles, which reflected those in earlier schemes discussed in Chapter Three: “Bypass Main Street,” “Provide Convenient Parking Space,” “Give the Pedestrian a Chance,” and “Develop a Shopping Environment.”⁵¹⁷ Lutes’ proposal is nearly identical to Gruen’s Appleton scheme from 1953, with a consistent approach and texture to the drawings.⁵¹⁸ After receiving permission from the city to conduct the trial, Lutes worked with the Oregon State Highway Department on a temporary bypass loop around downtown and prefabricated furniture for the mall experiment.⁵¹⁹ While the plan was not universally supported, and was nearly derailed by legal threats from several shop owners,⁵²⁰ it generated positive publicity and was deemed a success upon opening.

Lutes and Amundson claimed to have devised their experimental approach as a response to what they perceived as a profusion of unrealized and infeasible plans by the late 1950s. They wanted to “capture the public’s imagination and support” because “too much planning remains on paper.” To bolster their case for the mall, they undertook comprehensive data collection of shopping and traffic, as well as a shopper opinion postcard survey.⁵²¹ According to their survey, 77 percent of people had liked the mall and 52 percent considered the event a success. The highway department found that 432 more cars came into Springfield per day during the experimental period. Merchants saw a 14% increase in business during the trial.⁵²² The experiment was reported on the first page of the *Wall Street Journal* and over 200 cities wrote for the Shoppers’ Paradise report created by Lutes and his firm.⁵²³ At the American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO) Annual Conference the following spring, a 24-minute, sound, color film of Springfield’s test mall was shown to a nationwide audience of planners.⁵²⁴ For some, the Springfield test “demonstrated the possibility of a unified approach to the downtown’s future” and offered a proof of concept for pedestrianization beyond the planning stages.

515 Johnston, “A City Takes the First Step,” 11.

516 Ibid, 12.

517 Ibid, Ibid.

518 Ibid, 12-13.

519 Ibid, Ibid.

520 Ibid, Ibid.

521 Weiss, “The Downtown Mall Experiment,” 68n2. 386 cards were distributed and 121 were returned.

522 Johnston, 15.

523 Weiss, 69n2-4

524 Ibid, n4.

Two years after the experiment, in a May 1959 issue of *Buildings*, Lutes, like Gruen, expressed a tinge of skepticism about the experimental mall. “The shoppers’ mall brings with it no magic,” he said. “It will not solve the problems of traffic-pedestrian separation, parking, proper business location, or commercial area rehabilitation. But it will—if these other aspects of the problem are solved as part of a total plan—contribute to the bold and dramatic touch necessary to revitalize downtown.”⁵²⁵ Though Lutes recognized the shortfalls of his own scheme, the experimental malls continued to pop up, often assuming a carnival character that belied serious planning. A February 1959 article on pedestrian shopping malls by Ogden Tanner in *Architectural Forum* reported on these “retail merchandising stunt[s].”⁵²⁶ In Waco, Texas, the city “shut off a few blocks downtown briefly and crammed them with displays of new automobiles or farm machinery. Lubbock, Texas has had its ‘Million Dollar Mall,’ Rome, Georgia, its ‘Bargain Carnival,’ Waukegan, Illinois, its ‘Little Fort Days.’”⁵²⁷ Even Fort Worth, for which the practicality of the Gruen plan was then falling out of sight, hosted a three-day promotional mall. Such experiments were not unknown in larger cities, either. Boston closed Temple Place and West Street off its main shopping corridor, but reversed course after traffic backed up and larger stores complained of interference with their deliveries.⁵²⁸

Some cities had successful trials, but ultimately decided not to pursue permanent malls. Toledo, Ohio’s 1959 mall experiment on the city’s major shopping street lasted 110 days, almost two months longer than anticipated. The project, which was led by the Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commission and supported by then-AIA President and Toledo-native John Noble Richards, at first garnered widespread praise.⁵²⁹ Yet a second experiment tried the following year did not generate the same enthusiasm. In an article on the mall two years after the trail, Toledo’s Mayor said that while the mall was “nice to look at,” it “didn’t bring people back downtown just for shopping.”⁵³⁰ The city manager of Grand Haven, Michigan, a small city that had tried a temporary mall in 1958 concluded that while there was “talk by proponents of a permanent mall...the opposition... might marshal formidable legal resistance if the permanent mall were



4.3
Experimental Mall, Toledo, Ohio,
1959-1960. Credit: The Toledo Blade

525 Donald H. Lutes. “A Word of Warning,” *Buildings*, May 1959: 48.

526 Ogden Tanner. “Closed to Traffic,” *Architectural Forum* 110.2 (1959): 89.

527 *Ibid.*, 89.

528 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

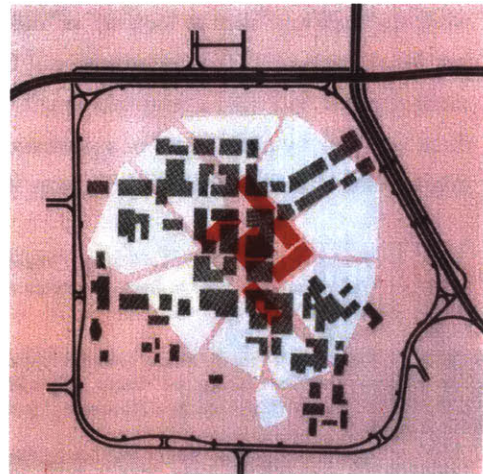
529 Weiss, 70n17. See *The Story of Toledo’s Shoppers’ See-way*, 16-page illustrated pamphlet on the temporary mall. For Coverage, see “Toledo Weighs Mall Experiment,” *Business Week*, November 28, 1959, 82, 85; and “Can Cities Save Downtown Areas?” *U.S. News & World Report*, November 16, 1959, 74-77.

530 Marvin D. Callaway. “More Cities Discard Downtown, Auto-less Malls for Suburbs,” *The Wall Street Journal*, February 9, 1961.



4.4
 Ground-level perspective of pedestrian mall
Kalamazoo 1980, Victor Gruen Associates.
 Credit: The Crawford Westbrook
 Collection, MIT Libraries

4.5
right: Comparison of Northland Center in
 Detroit and Kalamazoo. *Kalamazoo 1980*,
 Victor Gruen Associates
 Credit: The Crawford Westbrook
 Collection, MIT Libraries



undertaken.” “Where surgery is needed,” he said, “aspirin tablets are of little avail.”⁵³¹ In small cities and towns, the initial boost in sales rarely lasted. Many of the “gimmick” malls of the late 1950s, despite an initial burst of enthusiasm and profits, fell victim to the same concerns over parking and traffic that had plagued downtowns since the 1920s. Laurence Alexander of the Downtown Idea Exchange,⁵³² who had two years earlier called the mall a “must” for every downtown, declared that year that “the honeymoon was over.”⁵³³

Yet in some ways, the honeymoon was just beginning. In August 1959, as the experiment mall fad reached fever pitch, Kalamazoo, Michigan opened the first permanent pedestrian mall in the United States on Burdick Street, based on a plan by Victor Gruen Associates completed one year earlier. Over the next three years, permanent malls would be built in Miami Beach and Knoxville, Tennessee, and imitators would follow suit in the mid-to-late 1960s.

Mall City USA: Kalamazoo and the First Permanent Pedestrian Mall

Following on the success of his Fort Worth plan, Victor Gruen traveled around the country to promote his bold new plan for downtown. Cities welcomed his services. Between 1956 and 1962, Victor Gruen Associates made central business district plans for Miami (1956) and St. Petersburg, Florida (1957); Green Bay, Wisconsin (1956); Oberlin, Ohio (1957); Kalamazoo, Michigan (1958); Rochester, New York (1959); Stamford, Connecticut (1960); Santa Monica (1960) and Fresno, California (1960); St. Paul, Minnesota (1961); Paterson, New Jersey (1962); and Cincinnati, Ohio (1962).

As a city of 57,700, Kalamazoo presented Gruen with the challenge of shifting scale back to his proposal for Appleton, Wisconsin, while adapting the language of the Fort Worth plan to burnish his emerging reputation. The plan that came out of these efforts was *Kalamazoo 1980*, published in March 1958.⁵³⁴ *Kalamazoo 1980* retained many of the same elements and motifs as the Fort Worth plan. Graphically, it showed a vast pedestrian area consisting of a series of interconnected plazas punctuated by arcades, pavilions, kiosks, fountains, planters,

531 Weiss, 69n20.

532 Laurence Alexander’s work provides a fascinating and well-documented history of downtown malls from the 1950s through the 1980s. Alexander had founded the Downtown Research & Development Center in 1954 and served as the editor and publisher of the Downtown Idea Exchange from that time through the 1980s. In spite of his comments here, Alexander would go on to write at length about and advocate for downtown pedestrian and shopping malls over the course of his career.

533 Callaway, “More Cities.”

534 Victor Gruen Associates. *Kalamazoo 1980*. (Detroit, MI: Kalamazoo Planning Committee, 1958).

4.6

Burdick Street Mall, Kalamazoo,
Michigan, 1960

Credit: Kalamazoo Valley Museum



and public art. A series of illustrations—a man reading the newspaper, businessmen at lunch, a woman walking with her children—echoed the character of Fort Worth. The architectural treatment of the downtown combined both modern and historic structures, for which Jacobs had praised Gruen. As in the Fort Worth plan, the plan addressed the audience directly as “you” and was based on a meandering narrative. Though Gruen’s use of narrative played a smaller role in the Kalamazoo plan, it nonetheless included many familiar motifs, including the use of small vignettes showing the mall with temporary exhibitions, images of buildings being serviced, and the scene of a car arriving in the city off of a newly constructed highway. Gruen repeated here the iconic image of an executive looking out onto a pedestrianized downtown cityscape. Helicopters fly through the sky and small electric trams run down Burdick Street.

While the Kalamazoo plan mimicked Fort Worth in spirit, physically it signified a departure. Immense surface parking lots, rather than multi-level garages, covered almost the entire perimeter of the downtown, retrofitting the main retail street as an isolated shopping center. With the parking controversy at Fort Worth likely fresh in his mind, Gruen pursued a parking strategy for Kalamazoo that would require fewer public subsidies and be more practical for a small city. Rather than making a direct comparison to Rockefeller Center, as he had at Fort Worth, Gruen overlaid the entire downtown of Kalamazoo on a plan for Northland Shopping Center in Detroit, demonstrating how a reconfiguration of the downtown could mimic suburban precedents. The shift in scale from Fort Worth to Kalamazoo proved most striking in the plan’s main aerial perspective showing the entirety of downtown. The total pedestrianization scheme of Fort Worth at Kalamazoo gave way to a city refashioned as a

shopping mall.⁵³⁵ The qualities that had drawn a parallel between Fort Worth and a World's Fair were lacking here, as were many of the elements that had made that former plan distinctly urban in its character.⁵³⁶

In a pattern that Gruen would cringe at over the course of his career, Kalamazoo deferred his recommended long-range investments and opted to move forward with the immediate pedestrianization of two blocks of Burdick Street. The simple design made permanent the basic recipe then in use for the experiment malls, including the construction of small pavilions, water features, benches, and planters.⁵³⁷ On August 19, 1959, the Burdick Street Mall in Kalamazoo opened. At the opening for the mall, officials announced the approval of a revenue bond issue by the Michigan Municipal Finance Commission that would provide \$625,000 for off-street parking.⁵³⁸ In spite of the city's efforts to fund long-term improvements, Gruen reacted with dismay to the mall's hasty construction, "contending that a pedestrian mall without the infrastructural elements—perimeter road (or beltway), street improvements, parking areas, and support for mixed-use development—was by itself, merely a gimmick..."⁵³⁹

In spite of Gruen's hand wringing, the Burdick Mall proved a success. The mall prompted long-term downtown investment and activity and became a central factor in later revitalization efforts coordinated by the Downtown Kalamazoo Association. The city even began referring to itself as "Mall City USA." Ten years after its initial opening, the mall was expanded from two to three blocks and was completely revamped in 1970. Despite the failure of an urban renewal financing plan in 1963, Burdick Street Mall saw 25 to 50 percent business increases at locations adjacent to it.⁵⁴⁰ It also catalyzed new investments, including the Kalamazoo Center, a convention center, hotel, and office facility just off Burdick Street completed in 1975.⁵⁴¹ Only twenty years later, in the 1990s, after increased shopping center construction at the periphery, did Kalamazoo finally reopen part of the mall to traffic, and even then only to one lane of traffic.

535 Gruen's 1957 Oberlin scheme had a similar language and scale as Kalamazoo. The downtown as shopping mall prototype is evident in both. Alex Wall calls this type of scheme the "Northland-ization" of a small city. See Wall, 140n19.

536 It is worth noting that it was Gruen's Detroit office, led by Karl Van Leuven, who executed the *Kalamazoo 1980* plan. This office had been responsible for the Northland project and was busy drafting plans for regional shopping centers elsewhere at that time, which may have resulted in the character of this scheme.

537 Wall, 140.

538 "Street Banned to Cars; Made Shopping Mall; Kalamazoo Idea Draws Observers from Afar," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 20, 1959.

539 H. Bradford. "Gruen's Mall Visit Mends Some Fences," *Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 11, 1960. See Wall, 140.

540 Louis G. Redstone. *The New Downtowns: Rebuilding Business Districts*. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, New York, 1976), 6-9. See also Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo. *Banning the Car Downtown: Selected American Cities*. (The Institute for Environmental Action, No. HUD/PDR-192/3, 1976), 26-27.

541 Redstone, 10-11.



4.7, 4.8, 4.9

Lincoln Road Mall, Miami Beach, 1960. Designed by Morris Lapidus. Credit: Photo Archives of the Miami Herald.

The Mall Becomes Permanent: Lincoln Road and the Market Square Mall

The success of Kalamazoo was soon followed by two other significant mall projects, Miami Beach's Lincoln Road Mall in 1960 and Knoxville's Market Square Mall in 1961. Lincoln Road Mall, completed in 1960, stretched eight blocks towards the beach along what had once been the "Fifth Avenue" of Miami Beach, an area that local residents commonly referred to as having gone from "swamp to swank" after being converted into a mangrove lined promenade in the early 1900s.⁵⁴² In 1957, the Lincoln Road Progress Association retained the architect Morris Lapidus, a pioneering storefront designer, former peer of Gruen in New York, and champion of the distinctive Miami Modern (MiMo) style, to design a pedestrian mall for an eight-block stretch of the street.⁵⁴³ Lapidus' design for the mall boasted a central spine consisting of a series of monumental white follies, an alternating black and white band in the center of the street, as well as lush vegetation. Lapidus, who had, like Gruen, begun his career in storefront design in New York City and been an early thought leader in shopping center design,⁵⁴⁴ demonstrated the full creative potential of the pedestrian mall at Lincoln Road. Six blocks longer than Kalamazoo and integrated with a lavish and exotic parade of architectural sculptures, the design of the Lincoln Road Mall turned the momentum that had been sapped by the carnival atmosphere of the temporary malls towards the excitement of the permanent installations. The mall for the first time tried some of Gruen's as-yet unimplemented ideas from the Fort Worth plan, including a 3,000 car surface parking lot, a small electric tramway system to ferry passengers along the street, and a complete public art program.⁵⁴⁵

Knoxville's Market Square Mall, meanwhile, demonstrated how the mall concept could be molded to diverse settings. Completed in 1961, the Market Square Mall was designed by a coalition of architects drawn from the East Tennessee Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). By the 1950s, the neo-Romanesque, block long market hall building from 1897 stood increasingly at odds with the city's impulse to modernize. According to Benjamin McMurry, who penned an article about the mall in the July 1962 edition of the *AIA Journal*, the market was a "back-of-town sort of thing, in the heart of the central business district. As the city had grown, it had surrounded this symbol of its rural heritage

542 "Miami Beach's New Lincoln Road Mall: The Most Magnificent Shopping Plaza in All the Americas." Pamphlet. Shoppers' Brochure, 1964. Courtesy of Miami Beach Public Library Reference Department, Digital Archives.

543 "Lincoln Road Revitalization Plan," (Miami Beach, FL: City of Miami Beach Economic Development Department; Planning Division, 1981.)

544 See Smiley, 74, 173.

545 "Miami Beach's New Lincoln Road Mall," 1964.

with urban development, and the two were incompatible.”⁵⁴⁶ According to McMurry, the market had made its surroundings “sick,” increasing vacancies and depressing property values.⁵⁴⁷ The idea for demolishing the building and turning it into a mall had emerged from the Downtown Knoxville Association, a group that had formed in 1958 to coordinate downtown development and revitalization and was made up of the city’s leading citizens and prominent business interests. The Association’s first project, Gay Way, demolished a series of old warehouses and out buildings to construct a 200-car parking lot behind the city’s main street. An arcade and balcony were added to the backside of the buildings to provide a dual front for stores facing the parking lot.⁵⁴⁸ Following concerted action and widespread support for that project, the association turned towards the Market Hall’s demolition. They engineered support from the City Council, which backed the project by a wide margin.⁵⁴⁹ Nevertheless, as McMurry comments, the Market Hall demolition did encounter opposition from a motley group of “sentimentalists, antique lovers, and status-quo preservers” who “wanted the old buildings kept and refurbished.”⁵⁵⁰ The matter was swiftly resolved after the teenage son of a florist in the market accidentally burned the building down while sneaking out for a cigarette.

The fire paved the way for the development of the mall, which was assisted by the pro-bono work of the East Tennessee Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. While there had originally been some debate among the team as to whether or not to place a structure back on the site, the matter was resolved after a deed discovered for the original market uncovered that the land had to be occupied by a market or else revert its original ownership.⁵⁵¹ After the courts refused to describe an acceptable building for the site based on the deed, the AIA team designed and submitted a pavilion, whose design was eventually accepted by the courts. Business owners pooled their resources for the construction of sidewalk canopies and the architects divided the mall into a grid of 18” bands of concrete.⁵⁵² A distinctive central pavilion, consisting of “twenty-five elongated octagons of precast concrete, joined together at a height of 16”⁵⁵³ enclosed one-fifth of the pavilion. In total, the open market square space measured 130’ wide by 440’ long. Vendors were restricted to the

546 Benjamin McMurry. “Case Histories of Community Services: Market Square Mall,” *AIA Journal* (July 1962): 61.

547 Ibid, 61.

548 Ibid, Ibid.

549 Ibid, 62.

550 Ibid, Ibid. Those in favor of preservation included the poet Carl Sandburg and conservationist Harvey Broome.

551 Ibid, 63.

552 Ibid, 64.

553 Ibid, Ibid.



4.10
above: Market House, 1919, Market Square, Knoxville. Credit: *Traveler's Protective Association Magazine*, Vol. XIV, No. 7 (May 1920).

4.11
below: Market Square Mall, 1961
Benjamin McMurry Architects
Credit: *American Urban Malls*, Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo (1976)



sale of flowers and produce only⁵⁵⁴ and reported a 24% jump in sales and a 24% drop in vacancy rates a year after opening.⁵⁵⁵ Market Square Mall served as a springboard for other downtown revitalization efforts, including the Gay Way Promenade and a large-scale assessment of downtown real estate by the Downtown Association.⁵⁵⁶

Compared with the temporary malls and the two-block Kalamazoo Mall project, Lincoln Road Mall and Market Square Mall secured a new threshold for pedestrian malls in the United States.⁵⁵⁷ Both projects were spearheaded by well-organized business interests and city leaders keen on turning around their downtowns. Both had been built using high quality design and materials. They tempered the pedestrian mall craze that had followed Fort Worth plan and provided a series of important precedents in design as well as operation. In both cases, parking proved to be a critical precursor to pedestrianization, with Miami Beach and Knoxville both completing surface lots prior to the installation of their malls. While highway access to the core remained incomplete at this time, new systems of one-way streets and loop roads, as in the case of Kalamazoo, could afford drivers with a temporary solution to the problem. While only a handful of American cities had completed pedestrian malls by the early 1960s, many more had developed plans for their central business districts patterned on Gruen's Fort Worth Plan. These plans formed the basis of what would become the largest physical reshaping of the American city since the 1920s and by the early 1960s, many cities were ready to see their plans come to fruition.

Coding the Downtown Plan: Gruen Plan as Paradigm

Gruen's plan for Fort Worth set in motion both the pedestrian mall craze that characterized downtown revitalization efforts in the late 1950s as well as a flurry of plans for central business districts from 1956 through the early-1970s. Many of these plans were patterned on the original Gruen plan and included the basic recipe set forth for the revitalization of Fort Worth: perimeter highways, peripheral parking garages, and a pedestrianized shopping center. While the plans varied somewhat by the size and characteristics of the city, over the next ten years, with few exceptions, they prescribed the same solution for downtown.

554 McMurry, 65.

555 Ibid, 65. Numbers as of July 1962.

556 Also see Gruen, *Heart of Our Cities*, 326-328.

557 It is worth noting that several international precedents were frequently noted as inspirations during this period, including the revitalization and pedestrianization of Stockholm, the new town of Vallingby, Sweden, Stevenage and Coventry in England, and Cologne and Essen's pedestrianized centers in Germany. Sparks Street Mall in Ottawa began as a temporary experiment at this time and was repeated over multiple years before becoming a permanent mall.

As part of the initial investigation of this thesis, a coding exercise looking at seventeen downtown plans was undertaken. This analysis included plans for central business districts completed from 1956-1974 by Victor Gruen Associates and other firms active in that era. Plans were selected as part of this exercise based on several factors and sought to express diversity across time and authorship, and to show a range in quality and purpose. As mentioned in the introduction, the accessibility of plans in libraries and archives also influenced those selected.

The purpose of this investigation was twofold. First, this effort attempted to demonstrate that the Fort Worth plan had indeed established a “paradigmatic” strategy for downtown revitalization that was mimicked by municipalities around the United States. Second, it attempted to “decode” how different motifs and techniques of plan making, such as those discussed in Chapter Three, evolved over time. This thesis has attempted to confront the first of these questions through plan readings and content analysis rather than coding primarily. The second question, that dealing with changing motifs in plan making, yielded several interesting results.

Methodological Challenges

While the methodological challenges of this thesis were discussed in the Introduction, it is worth briefly expanding upon some of the issues related to coding here. The challenge of finding a representative body of plans, coding these plans, and establishing a framework for comparison, presented multiple difficulties. First, many plans that were initiated in the late 1950s as a response to the Fort Worth plan were not actually published until the 1960s and thus do not fit neatly into a progression. As a plan making typology, the central business district plan itself risks oversimplification. Some plans, such as Gruen’s Plan for Rochester’s Midtown Plaza or the Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee’s Plan for Baltimore’s Charles Center, focused primarily on a catalytic project, yet purposely mimicked the format and style of the downtown plan. Other plans considered residential housing as part of a larger framework for downtown revitalization (including both the core and the frame), sometimes because the source of the funding called for slum clearance and housing in areas around downtown.

The level of technicality of a plan also proved difficult to assess. The original investigation had been undertaken under the assumption that most pedestrian mall projects were supported by an accompanying plan. This proved not to be the case. In some cases, such as the AIA scheme for Knoxville’s Market Square Mall, no plan existed to support

the development of a pedestrian mall. Brochures that were created for the opening of the project were not considered plan documents, but rather taken as promotional ephemera. In the case of the Oklahoma City Central Business District Plan for I.M. Pei, to be discussed in Chapter Five, the plan itself was not intended as a public document that celebrated the central idea, but rather presented as a series of engineering specifications and documents for internal circulation. A model of that plan, as well as a series of hand drawn perspectives of its elements, served as the main visual material for analysis since public plan documents intended for widespread distribution were absent.

In the course of the analysis, it became apparent that plans of exceptional visual quality and content had been culled over the years by libraries and other archives, thus creating a sample that may not be representative of the general population of city plans. Furthermore, the interest of this thesis in Victor Gruen (and the availability of Gruen plans in the Westbrook archives) caused plans of his firm's genre and style to be slightly overrepresented, creating some bias in the overall coding. Had this thesis focused on I.M. Pei and urban renewal, the results (as well as the materials selected for analysis) might have been different.

To the author's knowledge, no study of this type has ever been undertaken for central business district plans. A comparable study of *urban design* plans, however, was conducted by Michael and Susan Southworth of the University of Berkeley-California's College of Environmental Design as part of a two-part analysis in 1973 and 1989.⁵⁵⁸ The first of these studies looked at various environmental quality indicators embedded within the analytical framework of urban design plans created from the early 1960s through the early 1970s.⁵⁵⁹ The second study replicated and adapted that same study based on data of plans from produced from 1973 through 1989. The analysis assessed each of the plans according to a variety of components, including its Environmental Quality Concerns (i.e. structure/legibility; openness; diversity); its Analytical Content (i.e. environmental descriptions, environmental evaluations); Analytical Techniques (i.e. noise level measurement; citizen interviews), and where applicable, Impact or Outcomes of the plan. Southworth's methodology provides an exhaustive overview of all of the potential elements of urban design plans, yet its comprehensiveness tends to undermine the study's legibility and arguably dilutes its overall thesis.

558 Southworth, Michael, and Susan Southworth. "Environmental Quality in Cities and Regions." *Town Planning Review* 44.3 (1973): 231-253; Southworth, Michael. "Theory and Practice of Contemporary Urban Design: a Review of Urban Design Plans in the United States." *Town Planning Review* 60.4 (1989): 369-403.

559 Southworth, "Environmental Quality," 232.

Several past studies that have investigated downtown plans and pedestrian malls are worth noting here. The fourth volume of Roberto Brambilla's footnotes series, *American Urban Malls: A Compendium*, offers a comparative look at pedestrian malls built in the United States from 1959 to 1976.⁵⁶⁰ For each mall, the authors provided basic statistics, such as the number of parking spaces and the legal instrument used for its adoption. This study offers a parallel to Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro's 1951 survey *Shopping Centers: Design and Operation*, which assessed the store types, square footage, and configurations of early shopping centers.⁵⁶¹ The most relevant study to my present analysis, however, is Wood, Brower, and Latimer's 1966 paper "Planner's People."⁵⁶² The paper, while not a thorough coding exercise, critiqued the dominant mode of practice in image making for central business district and city plan illustrations during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The authors, using a cross section of plans (many of which were surveyed again here), found and distilled common characterizations of people in "publicly-sponsored downtown projects" to suggest an implicit bias on the part of urban planners towards a certain category of desirable people downtown, principally the white middle-class residents then fleeing to the suburbs.⁵⁶³

None of these studies draws a perfect parallel with the present analysis. Southworth's, while exhaustive and comprehensive, remains ill-suited to the diversity of downtown plans from this era and has the potential to confound the reader. Brambilla's comparative approach has merits, but his was an advocacy effort rather than a critique. This study does not advocate for downtown plans by offering useful information to municipalities, but rather attempts to unpack their meanings through visual readings. The approach of "Planner's People," while arguably the most relevant approach, must here be expanded upon and transformed into an archival reading in order to effect a critical reappraisal.

While the content of these downtown plans merits wide-ranging investigation, including comparative analysis of the overall plan structure, written content, sources of funding, and plan actors, this comprehensiveness remains the province of a future study. Instead, those elements will be fleshed out in individual case studies, and the coding analysis done here focuses instead on certain key themes and motifs in the visual materials of the plans alone.

560 Brambilla, Roberto, Gianni Longo, and Virginia Dzurinko. *American Urban Malls. A Compendium*. (The Institute for Environmental Action, No. HUD/PDR-192/4, 1976).

561 Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro. *Shopping Centers: Design and Operation* (New York, NY: Reinhold Publishing, 1951).

562 E. Wood Jr, Sidney N. Brower, and Margaret W. Latimer. "Planners' People," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 32.4 (1966): 228-234.

563 Wood et al., 228.

Two principal drawing types were selected for detailed analysis: the illustrative site plan and the eye-level perspective. These vantage points represent two of the signature innovations of the Gruen Plan and offer a rich template for comparative assessment. Within each plan, several instances of each drawing (at different scales) type tended to appear. Each of these was assessed as part of the overall coding exercise. Secondary visual criteria and supporting information was also assessed based on whether or not it was included in the plan or not. This includes visual material such as photographs of blight, official clearance maps, or comparative site analyses (such as that between Fort Worth's downtown and Rockefeller Center). In this particular facet, the analysis relies to a degree on the Southworth's granular methodology, but strives to consolidate the overall number of categories for comparison.

As part of the analysis, the following plans were analyzed:

Downtown Plans Coded

1. *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow*, Victor Gruen Associates (1956)
2. *Kalamazoo 1980*, Victor Gruen Associates (1958)
3. *Charles Center*, The Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee (1958)
4. *Indianapolis Central Business District Report*, Metropolitan Planning Department, Marion County, Indiana (1958)
5. *A Plan for Central Tulsa*, Harold Wise, Richard Neutra, and Robert Alexander (1959)
6. *Midtown Plaza, Rochester, New York*, Victor Gruen Associates, (1959)
7. *Magic City Center Plan for Action: A General Framework for Revitalizing the Central Business District, Miami, Florida*, Metropolitan Dade County Planning Department (1960)
8. *Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation*, Victor Gruen Associates (1960)
9. *Erievuew, Cleveland*, I.M. Pei & Associates (1961)
10. *Center City Philadelphia*, Philadelphia Planning Commission (1963)
11. *Centropolis: The Plan for Central Los Angeles*, Los Angeles Central City Committee (1964)
12. *General Neighborhood Renewal Plan, Central Business District, Oklahoma City*, I.M. Pei Associates (1964)
13. *The Lower Manhattan Plan*, Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (1966)

14. *Boston Central Business District Planning Report*, Victor Gruen Associates (1967)
15. *Metro Center '85*, Minneapolis Planning & Development (1970)
16. *The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York*, Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (1971)
17. *Fort Worth CBD Sector Report*, Lawrence Halprin & Associates (1971)
18. *Central City Plan, Oklahoma City*, Gruen Associates (1975)

Downtown Plans consulted (partial list)

1. Philadelphia Central District Study, Philadelphia Planning Commission, Alderson & Sessions (1951)
2. *Downtown Appleton: Its Future*, Victor Gruen Associates (1953)
3. *Modernizing Downtown San Francisco*, San Francisco Department of City Planning (1955)
4. *A Greater Downtown Green Bay*, Victor Gruen Associates (1956)
5. *Downtown Decatur Development Plan*, Victor Gruen Associates (1957)
6. *St. Petersburg Central Core Plan*, St. Petersburg Department of Planning (1958)
7. *College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal*, Providence City Plan Commission (1959)
8. *The Community Plaza*, City of Syracuse, County of Onondaga, Ketchum-Miller-Arnold (1960)
9. *A Plan for Downtown Paterson, New Jersey*, Victor Gruen Associates, (1961)
10. *Lockport, New York*, Victor Gruen Associates (1961)
11. *A Revitalization Plan for the City Core of Cincinnati*, Victor Gruen Associates (1962)
12. *The Plan for Downtown Cincinnati*, Rogers, Taliaferro, Kostritsky, and Lamb (1964)
13. *Downtown Dubuque Development Plan*, Victor Gruen Associates (1965)
14. *Downtown Renewal Study, Buffalo, New York*, John Graham & Company (1966)
15. *A Proposal for the Core Area, Fort Worth, Texas*, AIA Fort Worth Chapter (1966)
16. *Bridgeport, General Plan for the Central Business Area*, Victor Gruen Associates (1967)
17. *Downtown Pueblo Tomorrow*, Victor Gruen Associates (1968)
18. *Portland Downtown Plan*, Portland City Planning Commission (1972)
19. *Central City Los Angeles 1972/1990*, Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd (1972)

Analysis and Key Findings

The content analysis and coding process followed three stages. First, a broad survey of planning documents from the period of interest was obtained and studied. This survey began with a focus on plans by Victor Gruen Associates, but broadened over time based upon the available collection and archival research related to the case studies. Roughly 40 plans were studied in full, with another 20 consulted in brief during the initial survey.

Based on the survey, a list of potential codes was devised, with a focus on particular elements that could be deduced from the illustrative site plans and perspectival renderings. During the coding process, this list was enriched and plans were repeatedly consulted. The emphasis of the exercise was as much to find those elements that were *excluded* from the plans, as it was to find those *included* within them.

284 codes were analyzed in total. Codes dealt with the visual material in the plans only, including illustrative site plans (at multiple scales); eye-level and aerial perspectives; diagrams; maps; and photographs. Statistical charts, the order of elements within the plan, and the shape and layout of the plan document were not analyzed here.

Based on initial observations of trends in the plan, codes were broken into primary, secondary, and tertiary categories. Tertiary codes took the initial observation, an image of a highway interchange, for instance, and coded it “highway.” Secondary codes grouped items like “highway” and “elevated walkway” together under “free flow,” since both codes deal with creating a seamless experience through modal separation. The primary code, in this case, might produce “efficiency,” since the object of free flow was to produce an efficient and modern cityscape free of congestion. Due to the complexity of the coding matrix and the multiple categorizations possible of each image, the discovery of clear trends relied in part on the content analysis and survey that preceded the coding exercise.

Coding produced several key findings, which are further enriched by charts describing key trends and observations included here.

1. From Highways to Mass Transit

Plans from the 1950s and early 1960s tended to include far more emphasis on highways and free flow than plans for central business districts from the late 1960s and early 1970s. This finding is not surprising, given the policy environments of these respective eras. The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 gave cities huge sums of federal funding to construct loop roads around their cores and they responded in part by including those roads in their plans.

After the passage of the Urban Mass Transit Act in 1964, many cities switched gears and began to prepare plans for subway systems and/or transit malls. Later plans almost universally discussed transit spending, in some cases even including a speculative transit map in the plan itself. Lawrence Halprin's 1971 *Fort Worth CBD Sector Report*, WMRT's 1971 *Regional Center* plan for Buffalo, and Minneapolis' *Metro Center '85* are all good illustrations of this. Of the plans published after 1963, a year after Kennedy declared a newfound commitment to public transportation, only I.M. Pei's Oklahoma City CBD (1964) plan lacked mention of a multi-level underground subway (transit) system. Before 1963, only the Charles Center Plan for Baltimore (1958) had alluded to the potential for a multi-level transit concourse, and even then, the presence of mass transit was secondary. Later plans also tended to eschew complete loop highways, either because the loops themselves were deemed unnecessary or because the highway commission opted for another option reflected in the later plan. In certain cases, such as in the Boston's 1967 *Central Business District Planning Report* by Gruen and the 1966 *Lower Manhattan Plan*, a loop was not included due to the structure and scale of the proposal focused on a subsection of the core area.

2. From the Core to the Core-Frame

A second noticeable development from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s was the expansion of the scope of planning from downtowns to "central areas." The first CBD plans tended to limit themselves to the highly urbanized core of downtown. Later plans, however, even in mid-sized cities like Fort Worth, greatly expanded their notion of the center and included discussions of superblock housing complexes, waterfront areas, and even neighborhood sub-plans. *Metro Center '85*, for instance, included three illustrative site plans for neighborhood housing complexes. This pattern was not entirely consistent, however, since some plans, such as the 1959 *Plan for Central Tulsa*, anticipated these developments, while others, such as WMRT's Buffalo plan, seemed to ignore them. That the relationship between downtown and its neighborhoods, waterfronts, and overall region became increasingly important, however, is clear.

3. Persistent Lack of Racial Awareness and Presence of Middle Class Shoppers

Despite the racial tensions that flared in the late 1960s, few of the plans studied actively changed their representational techniques to reflect a more diverse downtown consumer population. Of the 17 plans surveyed, only the *Metro Center '85* plan for Minneapolis included an African American figure in one of its drawings or in its photo imagery. While some of the

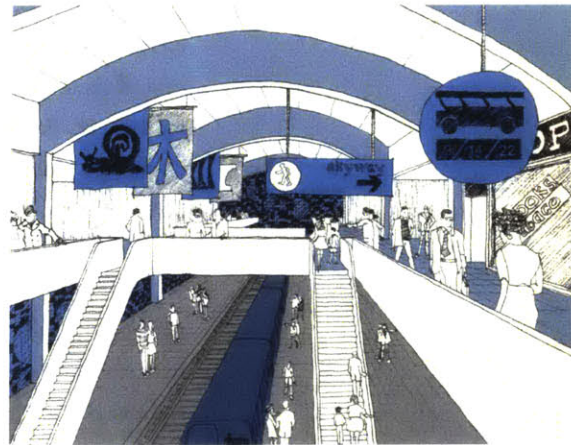
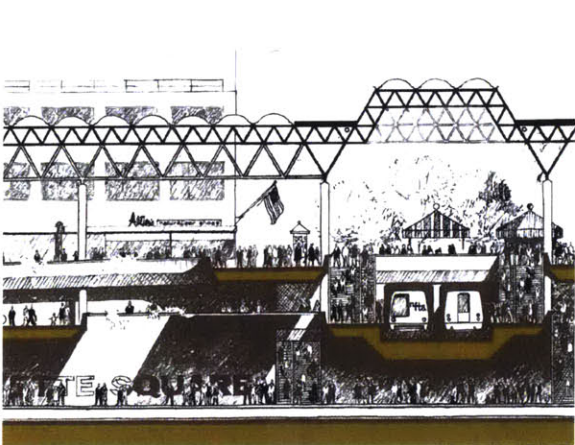
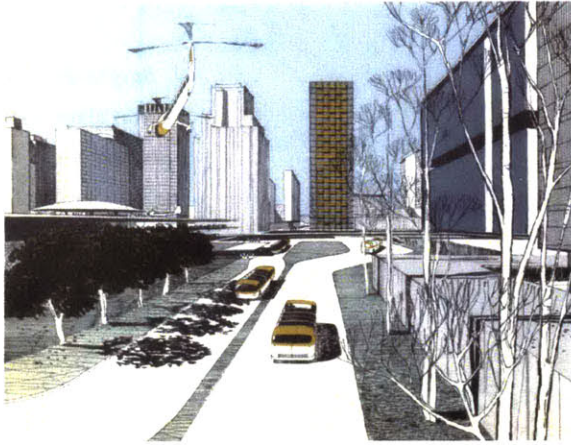
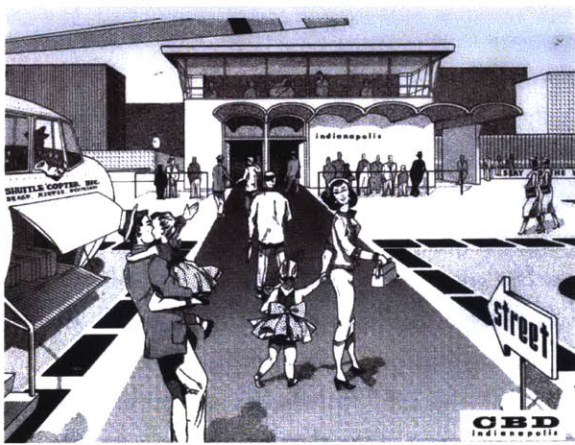
Transportation Codes

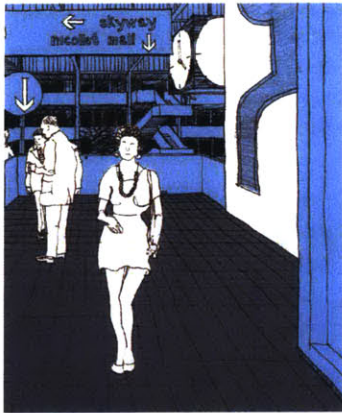
The initial focus on highway planning and heliports by the mid-1960s shifts to include and highlight transit as a vital aspect of downtown revitalization.

Transportation Codes, 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15

top left: *Indianapolis Central Business District Report*, 1958
 top right: *A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow*, 1956
 bottom left: *The Regional Center*, Buffalo, 1971
 bottom right: *Metro Center '85*, Minneapolis, 1970

Category	Plan	A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow (Victor Gruen Associates, 1956)	Kalamazoo 1966 (Victor Gruen Associates, 1966)	Indianapolis Central Business District Report (Marion County Planning Commission, 1958)	Charles Center (The Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, 1959)	Plan for Central Tulsa (Harold H. Hays, Harold Hays and Robert Associates, 1960)	Central Area Fresno, California (Vol. 2 (Victor Gruen Associates, 1960))	Magic City Center (Plan for Action (Miami Planning Commission, 1960))	Review (Chevrolet, L.M. Pei and Associates, 1961)	Central City Philadelphia (Planning Commission, 1963)	Centrocite: The Plan for Central City Los Angeles (Los Angeles City Planning Department, 1964)	Central Business District Plan, Chatterton City (L.M. Pei and Associates, 1964)	The Lower Manhattan Plan (MART, 1965)	Boston Central Business District Planning Report (Victor Gruen Associates, 1967)	Metro Center '85 (Minneapolis Planning and Development, 1970)	The Regional Center (Buffalo, MART, 1971)	Fort Worth CBD (Victor Gruen Associates, 1971)	Central City Plan (Chatham City, Gruen Associates, 1972)	Image Type		
10-001	Heliport	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
10-002	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
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	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram
10-004	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
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	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	
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	Highway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Diagram	





4.16

Only one of seventeen plans included an African American figure in its illustrations. *Metro Center '85*, Minneapolis Planning and Development, 1970.

plans included a brief discussion of race, it remained a tangential feature in the report, a surprising trend given the racial turmoil of the time. The persistent lack of racial awareness demonstrates how entrenched was the objective of bringing the white, affluent, middle class back downtown, as well as the biases held by those planners and illustrators involved.

Plans, by and large, tended to include the same set of characters going about the same sets of activities from 1956 to 1974. Most engaged in leisure or consumption activities, including shopping, dining, and reading the newspaper. Some of the figures in the plans exhibited middle class norms intended to convey safety or domesticity, such as mothers with strollers or couples chaperoning children. While styles of dress (see *Metro Center '85*) and the level of formality shifted in the late 1960s, the characters themselves remained otherwise stagnant. In some cases, such as the *Buffalo Regional Center plan*, the figural drawings seemed to suggest those of earlier plans, suggesting an inherent conservatism noticeable in other areas of the scheme.⁵⁶⁴

4. *Burgeoning Environmental Awareness*

Of the plans studied, only two, the 1971 *Fort Worth CBD Sector Report* plan and the 1967 *Boston Central Business District Planning Report*, included an image of a trash receptacle. Before 1971, few plans expressed much awareness of environmental concerns or pollution. While one explanation for this may be that environmental concerns might be better represented in parks plan or regional plan studies than CBD plans, the trend of creeping environmentalism in the coding suggests otherwise. Four of the six plans surveyed after 1965 included a plan for either their waterfront or river, whereas only two of the eleven plans surveyed before included any mention of them whatsoever. By contrast, four of the same eleven plans surveyed before 1966 included reflecting pools, while only one of six after 1966 did, indicating a shift from constructed to natural landscapes. Among the later group of plans, five of six had open space or landscape plans, while only one plan contained a landscape plan before 1965.

5. *Underpasses and Overpasses*

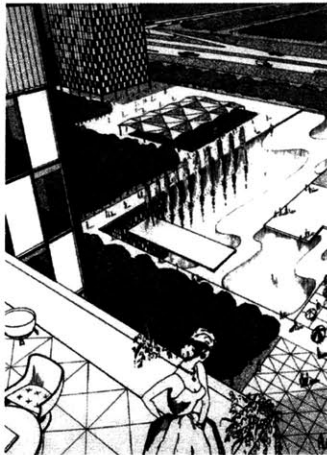
Among the most surprising findings from the coding exercise was the persistence of certain ideals and motifs of modernization. Elevated walkways were featured in all but one of the plans coded, indicating the persistence of that idea for downtowns focused on creating both seamless,

⁵⁶⁴ Interestingly, WMRT's *Inner Harbor Plan* (1964) was one of the few from its time to show racial diversity. Nonetheless, this remained an exception to the trend.

all-weather connections between downtown stores as well as ensuring the free flow of traffic around the perimeter. It is interesting to note, however, that while elevated walkways remained a consistent strategy for downtowns, over the course of urban renewal, underpasses became increasingly common in plans as well. Conversely, subterranean loading systems, which Gruen and others touted in their earliest plans, gradually disappeared due to their cost and the practicality and ease of creating loading access on one-way alleys. Few subterranean loading docks systems were built and ultimately, some elevated pedestrian systems (such as Houston and Fort Worth) became underground concourses.

6. *The Disappearance of Fanciful Flourishes*

Plans from the late 1950s tended to retain some traces of the streamlined modernist aesthetic of the 1939 World's Fair, including sculptural rooftop elements, futuristic superfluities, and heliports. The inclusion, in the *Indianapolis Central Business District Report* of a family disembarking from a "flying machine" at a heliport station with rooftop access to the mall, is perhaps the best illustration of this. Gruen's Kalamazoo and Fort Worth Plans as well as Neutra, Alexander, and Wise's plan for Central Tulsa, all retained these stylized elements, which all but disappeared from plans in the late 1960s and 1970s.



4.21

Indianapolis Central Business District Report, 1958.

Along with the disappearance of the rooftop flourishes, carnival motifs also gradually faded after 1960. Though the Pei Plan's images of Oklahoma City's Tivoli Gardens from 1964 represent one exception, the containment of the merry-go-round in the garden, as opposed to in the public square, suggests a significant difference of intention.

7. *The Shifting Character of Pedestrian Malls*

While pedestrian malls persisted as a viable strategy throughout the entirety of the urban renewal era, later plans were more likely to have either semi-malls, transit-malls, and/or enclosed malls. The "total" pedestrianized downtown of Gruen's Fort Worth and Kalamazoo plans faded after the late 1950s, though several later Gruen plans found in the overall survey, such as his plan for Cincinnati (1962) would partly revive the idea. Main Street pedestrian malls, often with a series of cross malls or pedestrian feeders, as in Fresno and Appleton, proved to be a common type throughout the entire period.

8. *Megastructure and Sectional Representation*

Several shifts in representation were noted through coding. Whereas plans in the 1950s rarely included sections or sectional diagrams, they

Pedestrian Mall Codes

The coding showed an increasing prevalence of transit and semi-malls in the mid-to-late 1960s. Pedestrian malls remained a consistent element of plans nonetheless.

Pedestrian Mall Codes: 4.22, 4.23, 4.24, 4.25

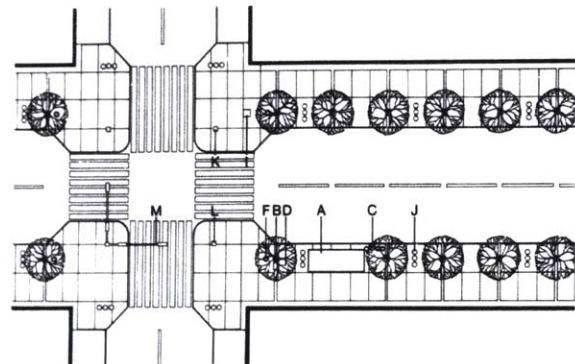
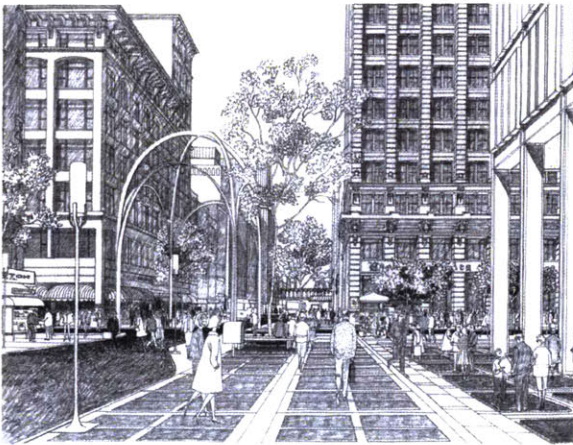
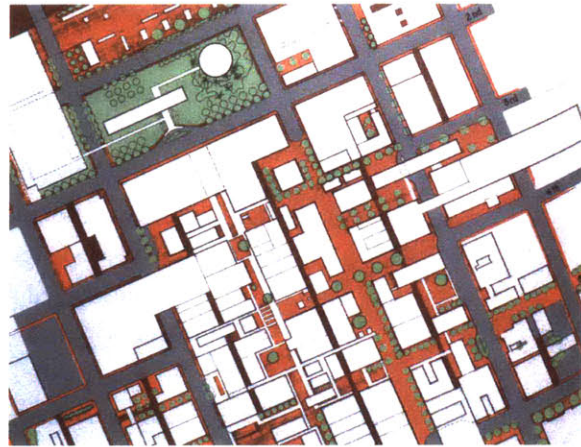
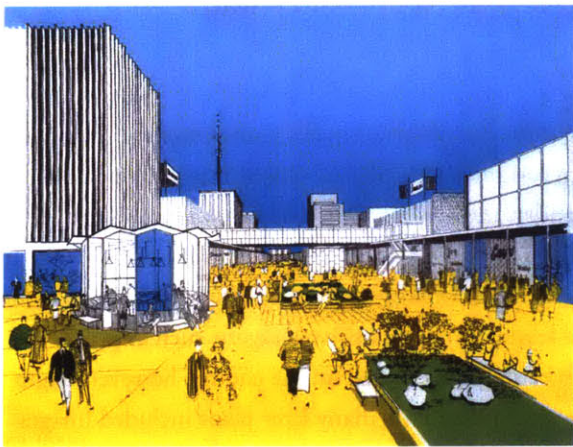
cruciform mall: *Kalamazoo 1980, 1958*

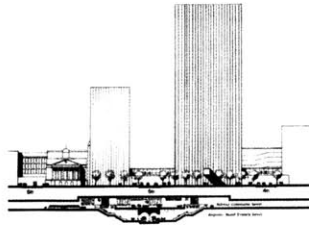
polynodal mall: *Plan for Central Tulsa, 1959*

transit mall: *Centropolis LA, 1964*

semi-mall: *Fort Worth CBD Sector Report, 1971*

Category	Plan	A Greater Fort Worth Tomorrow (Victor Gruen Associates, 1956)	Kalamazoo 1980 (Victor Gruen Associates, 1956)	Indianapolis Central Business District Report (Marion County Planning Commission, 1958)	Charles Center (The Planning Council of the District of Columbia, 1958)	Plan for Central Tulsa (Herald News, Richard Neutra, and Robert Alexander, 1959)	Central Area (Fredricka, Carolina Volz (Victor Gruen Associates, 1960)	Magic City Center (Urban Planning Commission, 1960)	Fiveves (Cleveland, F.M. Pei and Associates, 1961)	Center City (Philadelphia (Philadelphia Planning Commission, 1963)	Centropolis: The Plan for Central City, Los Angeles (Los Angeles City Planning Department, 1964)	Central Business District Plan (Chicago City (J.M. Pei and Associates, 1964)	The Lower Manhattan Plan (WURT, 1965)	Boston Central Business District Planning Report (Victor Gruen Associates, 1967)	Metro Center 85 (Minneapolis Planning and Development, 1970)	The Regional Center (Sulco, WURT, 1971)	Fort Worth CBD Sector Report (Sulco, WURT, 1971)	Center City Plan (Oklahoma City, Gruen Associates, 1975)	Package Type
Pedestrian Mall	Urban Mall (Midtown) Shopping Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Cruciform
	Polynodal Mall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Polynodal
	Transit Mall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Transit
	Semi-Mall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Semi-Mall
Semi-Mall	Transit Mall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Transit
	Semi-Mall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Semi-Mall





4.26
Section. *Fort Worth CBD Sector Report*, 1971.

appeared with increasing frequency in the 1960s. The inclusion of sectional representation of the downtown suggests the advent of a “megastructural” concept of urban form as well as the gradual shift from aerial advertisement to technical reports. From Bacon’s 1963 *City Center* plan onwards, virtually all plans included sectional diagrams showing modern towers, multi-level parking garages, elevated and subterranean walkways and pedestrian malls as an interlocking and cohesive structure. This is perhaps best exemplified in Gruen’s 1967 plan for Boston and the 1971 WMRT plan for Buffalo. The inclusion of street sections, often denoting a more “balanced” streetscape, also emerged in later plans, although this expressed a trend different from the complex vertical megastructure. These would be a hallmark of urban design plans in the 1970s and 1980s.



4.27
Blight. *Magic City Center Plan for Action*, Miami, 1960.

9. Images of Blight

Among the surprising shifts not observed in the coding was the inclusion of images highlighting conditions of “blight.” Blight imagery (including images of hanging laundry, traffic, pollution, and cacophonous signage) had been a longstanding feature of plans, going back to the early 1900s. It was anticipated that the images of blight would be weighted towards earlier plans, with later plans featuring more positive imagery, such as people enjoying public spaces or shopping. Based on the coding, however, blight imagery evidenced no clear pattern. As many later plans included images showing traffic congestion and deteriorating buildings, for instance, as did earlier ones. Clearance and parcel disposition maps likewise showed no clear pattern, indicating that their persistence was likely due to the origins of this body of plans in urban renewal funds.

10. Pei Plans as Anomalous

As anticipated, plans by I.M. Pei appear anomalous based on the coding. While the two plans included in the coding were both relatively short, with the first and third lowest total number of codes observed, these plans also differed from other downtown plans in their exclusion of key motifs. Neither of the Pei Plans included a pedestrian mall, for instance, though the Oklahoma City plan did include an enclosed mall. Both plans deemphasized highway improvements and loop roads, instead including widened surface access roads. Discussion of transit improvements, save for the brief mention of a bus terminal in the Oklahoma City plan, were wholly absent as well. The absence of certain plan motifs from Pei’s work can be read here as a purposeful exclusion reflecting an alternative iteration of and approach to modernism and modernization. The “sparseness” of these plans may be read as intentional and purposeful contrast to the work

of Gruen and others. Pei's plans and their differences from the conventional paradigm will be discussed at greater length in the Chapter Five.

Conclusions from the Coding

Coding provided an important source of data as well as a necessary supplement to the plan readings conducted throughout this thesis. While it would have been desirable to code a larger body of plans by a wider set of actors, this initial set of observations supports some of the initial hypotheses about downtown plans and plan making, and suggests other areas for further investigation. A follow-up coding exercise might also look at civic center plans and city plans from before and after this era so as to draw a more comprehensive view of how and when changes occurred. Focusing on a single drawing or rendering type could also prove valuable in future studies, given the amount of time required to closely analyze an entire plan.

Downtowns in Town

Bringing Southdale Downtown: Midtown Plaza in Rochester, New York

Up until 1961, Gruen's most successful commissions remained in the suburbs. While he had garnered significant exposure for his daring Fort Worth plan and his influence in bringing about the Kalamazoo mall, the former was never implemented and the latter had been realized at what Gruen perceived to be an insignificant scale. It was Midtown Plaza in Rochester, New York, opened in 1962, which proved to Gruen and his contemporaries that his visions could come to fruition downtown.

In December 1956, during the flurry of meetings he held with city officials in the wake of Fort Worth's unveiling, Gruen traveled to Rochester, New York to meet with two downtown department store executives.⁵⁶⁵ Gilbert McCurdy of McCurdy's Department Store and Fred Forman of B. Forman Co. Store had both been mulling a move to the suburbs, but wanted to consult Gruen on his ideas for downtown revitalization. Compared with Fort Worth, Rochester had an exceptionally organized government that was preparing for change as well as private sector leaders willing to contribute to downtown's rebirth. The city had already been working with the planner Ladislav Segoe on plans for the metropolitan region and downtown since the 1940s⁵⁶⁶ and as a result of these efforts, had secured funding for an inner highway loop and 500-car city garage prior to Gruen's arrival.

With characteristic showmanship, Gruen convinced McCurdy

565 Wall, 143.

566 See Ladislav Segoe. "Rochester's Traffic Strainer," *American City* 69.4 (1954): 145.

and Forman to gamble on downtown's future. After seeing Gruen's plan for the first enclosed downtown shopping center in the country, the city began to quietly acquire and consolidate 17 parcels of land with funding from the New York State Teachers Pension Fund.⁵⁶⁷ Though Gruen's plan for Midtown Plaza (1959) showed the mall as the crossroads of a new downtown unit completely enclosed by a loop road, the plan itself more directly applied the formal characteristics and lessons drawn from his enclosed suburban shopping malls to downtown. In Rochester, he called for a 2000-car multi-level garage integrated into the mall, directly linked to the loop highway, and a central sky lit court with a clock tower, the Clock of the Nations, designed by the artist-designer Gere Kavanaugh. The 18-story Midtown Plaza tower, the first skyscraper built in Rochester in 30 years, would include hotels, offices, parking, and bus connections, making it a seminal mixed-use project that preceded pioneering efforts like Water Tower Place in Chicago by over a decade. The design of the central pedestrian plaza, meanwhile, echoed that of the Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota (1956), including the mall's iconic crossing escalators framing the central space. Midtown's design embodied Gruen's frequent allusions to the life of Central European urban squares, which he often cited in his writings and speeches, and of his fascination with joy and gaiety of World's Fairs and Disney.

The success at Midtown Plaza demonstrated how downtown revitalization could go well beyond the scale of the pedestrian mall. Midtown Plaza was, as Alex Wall has suggested, "one of the first projects undertaken fully by private investors but integrated within the framework of Rochester's publicly supported urban renewal plan."⁵⁶⁸ Though Gruen publicized his own genius in bringing the project to fruition, the planner Ladislav Segoe, perhaps anxious at seeing his legacy obscured, contextualized Gruen's boasts as only one part of over a decade's work spearheaded by his firm to secure transportation and infrastructure investments that ultimately made the project feasible.⁵⁶⁹

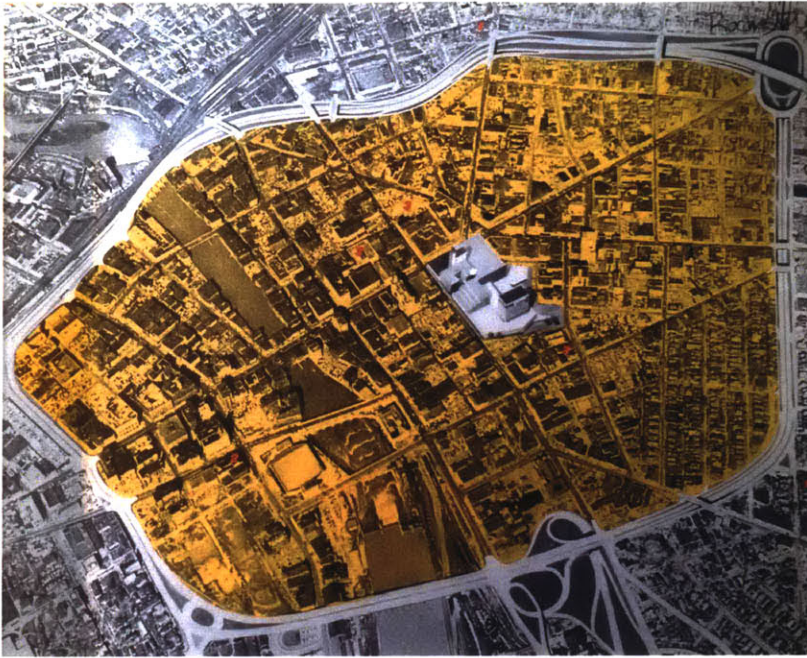
The response to Midtown Plaza was immediate. Xerox, which had been planning to relocate to suburbs, chose instead to build its own downtown skyscraper, which it connected directly to mall.⁵⁷⁰ The city leveraged the project's success to begin work on a civic center across the river. In 1963, Rochester Gas & Electric released a film, "Rochester: A City of Quality" highlighting Midtown as the focal point of the city's revitalization. The film began with a series of shots of shoppers pacing the

567 Wall, 143.

568 Ibid, 148.

569 Ibid, 148. Ladislav Segoe. *Urban Land* (1962), 2-5

570 Ibid, 149.



4.28

Plan for Midtown Plaza, Rochester, New York, 1959. Victor Gruen Associates. Credit: Crawford Westbrook Collection, MIT Libraries

floors of the newly opened mall. It then proceeded to the Clock of Nations, where dancing marionettes⁵⁷¹ that perform “in the carnival spirit that is the timeless magic of the marketplace”⁵⁷² enchanted groups of children. The film referred directly to Midtown as an effort to “bring the best of the suburbs downtown.”⁵⁷³ Nonetheless, Midtown Plaza, which was owned and partly managed by the city, remained a public rather than a private space. In this sense, unlike the private suburban malls, it had the potential to serve as true commons rather than a re-enactment of downtown without its detriments. Though successful during its first two decades of operation, the opening of several outlying shopping centers in the 1980s and the closing of McCurdy and Forman’s Department Stores in the mid-1990s, ultimately spelled the end for Midtown. After 46 years in operation, Midtown Plaza closed in 2008 to make way for a new development, which adapted the building’s existing skyscraper core, yet demolished the mall.

Though Gruen’s plan for Midtown Plaza mirrored the visual language he used in his other proposals, Midtown stands most clearly in the lineage of downtown projects like Rockefeller Center the Prudential Center, which would open in 1964, and Charles Center in Baltimore, a multi-block revitalization effort led by the Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee. From the mid-1960s onward, mixed-use centers like Midtown Plaza would parallel the evolution the pedestrian mall and persist

571 “Rochester: A City of Quality.” Educational Film, 1963. Sponsored by Rochester Gas & Electric. Accessed April, 2016.

572 “Rochester, a City of Quality,” Ibid.

573 Ibid. Ibid.

today as a common typology in downtowns across the United States.⁵⁷⁴

While Victor Gruen offered concrete vision for the revitalization of downtown, after the mid-1960s and the opening of Fresno's Fulton Mall, his personal influence gradually waned. A rising corps of actors, including the planner David Wallace, architect I.M. Pei, and developer James Rouse, among others, would all exercise greater influence on planning and urban design in the 1960s and 1970s. Among architects and planners, firms like Welton Beckett Associates and Charles Luckman Associates, and later, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill and landscape architects like Lawrence Halprin and Johnson, Johnson, and Roy would design the mixed-use downtown malls and pedestrian plazas dreamed of by Gruen in the 1950s. In Chapter Five, this thesis will investigate the role that those actors played in the production of downtown from 1964-1974. Before delving into that discussion, however, it is important to note the impact of Baltimore's Charles Center in the late 1950s and introduce some of the key actors that will be discussed in the final chapters of this thesis.

Charles Center and the Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc.

In the mid-1950s, Baltimore, like most cities of the Northeast, was struggling with downtown deterioration and preoccupied by the plight of decentralization. For 20 years, employment had stagnated, downtown real estate assessments had declined 10 percent, and between 1952 and 1957, the downtown department stores witnessed a 12 percent decrease in sales.⁵⁷⁵ Baltimore leaders looked to Pittsburgh's Allegheny Conference as a model of an active congress of business interests who could spur a downtown renaissance. Led by the mortgage banker Hunter Moss, he architect Archibald Rogers, department store owner J. Jefferson Miller, and a group of "100 CEOs" considered Baltimore's "movers and shakers,"⁵⁷⁶ the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC), Inc. formed in 1954. The GBC and Baltimore's Committee for Downtown recruited David Wallace, who had been the director of planning and development for Philadelphia's Redevelopment Authority under Edmund Bacon. Wallace had authored the city's well-known Central Urban Renewal Area (CURA) Report⁵⁷⁷ in

574 For a thorough investigation on mixed-use projects downtown from the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s, see Louis G. Redstone. *The New Downtowns*. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1976).

575 Wallace. *Urban Planning My Way*, 6-7.

576 Ibid, 6.

577 According to M.G. Scott, 522-524, "The CURA Report did not recommend abandonment programs already under way, but it sought to relate them to a wide range of activities designed to halt further decline in the inner city...it anticipated...model-city programs by recommending programs for adult education to aid the disadvantaged, general improvement of all city services in areas not designated for clearance, new and improved public and private programs to treat problems of family disorganization, delinquency, crime, and poverty, and legislation to induce open-occupancy housing in the suburbs and lessen the pressures that were forcing the expansion of the 'black belt.'" (523)

1956 and held a teaching position at the University of Pennsylvania. In his 2004 memoir, Wallace described his assignment at the GBC. “The Planning Council members and the GBC had been very impressed by the architect Victor Gruen’s recently published visionary Plan for Downtown Fort Worth, Texas...My task was to prepare a plan for the Central Business District (CBD) as exciting as Gruen’s, but with the built-in approval of key representatives of the city administration and the business community to ‘insure’ its acceptance and implementation. When I asked why Baltimore’s leaders didn’t rely on the city planning commission to prepare a plan, they said that they wanted planning one step removed from the political process.”⁵⁷⁸

Wallace built a strong design team behind him to realize the plan, including George Kostritsky, who later, as a principal in the firm RTKL (Rogers, Taliaferro, Kostritsky, and Lamb), would develop downtown plans for Cincinnati, Hartford, and Charlotte.⁵⁷⁹ He sought the counsel of a variety of leading figures in the development of his plans, including James Rouse, the mortgage banker turned shopping mall developer and former partner of Hunter Moss, chairman of the GBC. Wallace and his team, based on interviews with local stakeholders, determined that rather than undertake the Baltimore Central Business District plan immediately, that they would “search for an urban renewal project big enough to have a major impact, yet small enough to be ‘doable’ in a relatively short time.”⁵⁸⁰ The project that the Committee settled on was a 22-acre area at the northwest corner of downtown known that became known as Charles Center. According to Wallace, Charles Center, was “located in an area of mostly small, deteriorated old buildings between the CBD’s office and governmental center on the east and the still-viable, but increasingly troubled, retail center on the west. The properties between them were characterized by urban obsolescence and deterioration and were eligible for public renewal to ‘eliminate blight’ through clearance. This would allow for private construction to strengthen the overall CBD and ultimately set the stage for the Inner Harbor to the south,” which Wallace and others pointed to as future phase in the redevelopment of downtown.⁵⁸¹ While the original project for Charles Center had been only 22-acres, the site increased its area to 33-acres after James Rouse recommended a northern extension of the site, which would coincidentally be just across the street

578 Wallace, 10. Wallace notes that while the City Planner Arthur McVoy was talented and had developed a series of useful schemes, he did not have the confidence of the Mayor and was thus in a weak position politically to realize his plans.

579 Ibid, 11-12.

580 Ibid, 15.

581 Ibid, 19.

4.29

"Aerial Perspective - After" *Charles Center* (1958). The Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc. Courtesy of MIT Libraries



from Rouse's office.⁵⁸² Final site plans and architectural models for center were completed in 1958 and approved by Baltimore City Council in March 1959.⁵⁸³

Though it covered only a portion of downtown, the plan for Charles Center both visually and structurally read as a "Gruen Plan." It had, after all, been Wallace's task, at the bequest of the GBC, to create a plan as visually enticing as Gruen's, but with a firm financial and political base to back it up. The imagery of the Charles Center plan mimicked Gruen's use of a detailed before-after aerial perspective of downtown and repeated the cellular structure of downtown that he pioneered at Fort Worth.⁵⁸⁴ On the cover of the plan, an abstract "parti" diagram simplified the basic structure of Charles Center just as Gruen's circulation diagrams had illustrated Fort Worth as an entity disembodied from its larger context. Wallace's plan even went so far as to copy the tripartite narrative structure of Fort Worth, including the stories of the "businessman," the "shopper,"

582 Wallace, 20.

583 The site plans in the Charles Center plan itself were for the 22-acre site only. It is not clear why the other 11 acres were not included in the plan, but it is assumed to have been an issue of timing.

584 *Charles Center*. (Baltimore, MD: The Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc. 1958), inside cover.

and the “visitor,” who peers, much as Gruen’s executive had, down onto a tower framed plaza teeming with people.⁵⁸⁵ Wallace’s staff copied the subtlest aspects of language and graphics from the Gruen plan. The illustrative site plan, for instance, used the same yellow background as Fort Worth’s detailed site plan drawings. Where the two plans differed, however, was in their scale and practicality. At 33-acres, the Charles Center site was only a fraction of Fort Worth’s downtown. Its size allowed Wallace and his team to treat the area almost as a single building, with each level detailed according to its program, parking requirements, and circulation.⁵⁸⁶ In other ways, like Gruen’s Midtown Plaza, whose plan was published one year after, Charles Center recognized its relationship within the downtown and presaged elements of the later Baltimore CBD Plan, which was published in 1959. Charles Center also made direct reference to Pittsburgh’s Mellon Square and Philadelphia’s Penn Center projects, then under construction and with which Wallace would have been highly familiar.⁵⁸⁷

As Charles Center had reflected the visual language and layout of the Gruen report, its publication in 1958 also pointed to the arrival of large-scale urban renewal downtown. With the experienced Wallace at its helm and the support of the GBC, Charles Center offered a detailed “blueprint for action,” which mapped out the step-by-step urban renewal process that could be realized through a “public and private partnership.”⁵⁸⁸ As noted in the plan itself, Baltimore was the first city in the United States to designate its entire downtown as an urban renewal area.⁵⁸⁹ Urban renewal legislation enabled the city to condemn and clear properties through the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA), chaired by Walter Sondheim, a vice-president of the Hochschild-Kohn Department Store chain.⁵⁹⁰ BURHA would acquire all of the properties, consisting of 250 parcels in the Charles Center area, except four buildings deemed significant as well as an existing parking garage, at fair market value.⁵⁹¹ Properties that could not be acquired were to be condemned. All streets would be closed and demapped. Two surrounding perimeter streets were slated for widening. The plan accounted for all of the utility lines and infrastructural elements crossing the site, including electrical conduits, sanitary sewers, gas, and steam lines. A detailed plan was drawn up for revisions to the zoning code and the existing property lines.

585 *Charles Center*, 2.

586 *Ibid.*, 6-7.

587 *Ibid.*, 14.

588 *Ibid.*, 18.

589 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

590 Wallace, 21. According to Wallace, following the plan’s release, the Planning Council of the GBC was placed under contract with the BURHA to see through the implementation of the Charles Center plan and other efforts.

591 *Charles Center*, 18.



4.30

“A Visitor.” *Charles Center* (1958).
The Planning Council of the Greater
Baltimore Committee, Inc.
Courtesy of MIT Libraries

IT IS 1968:
 Imagine yourself a visitor,
 a businessman,
 or a shopper in Charles Center,
 the focus of
 the new Downtown Baltimore.
 Gone are the congestion,
 traffic jams, noise
 and the drab, dull buildings
 with which you
 were once all too familiar.
 Picture the new
 Downtown environment.

4.31

Charles Center (1958). The Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc. Courtesy of MIT Libraries

“The economic soundness of Charles Center,” the plan stated “will be the receipt of firm bids for the land for its development in accordance with the plan,” which “is the role of Baltimore’s private business community in partnership with public enterprise.”⁵⁹² The Charles Center plan was sure to receive firm bids. After all, downtown business leaders had led its undertaking and coordinated its development “outside of the political process.” The plan presaged the public-private partnerships of the *Downtown Inc.* era of the 1970s and 1980s, while leveraging the federal money available for large-scale clearance and renewal by the late 1950s. For those displaced by the project, however, the plan offered a grim assessment. “Once owners and tenants accept the fact that Charles Center is really going to happen,” it stated, “their greatest relocation resource is their own initiative, ability to pay economic rents and prices for the space and locations they need, and their individual solutions to their own problems.”⁵⁹³ At the end of the plan, the GBC included a map showing the boundaries of the Charles Center parcel with a series of nebulous translucent bubbles around “possible subsequent renewal action” areas, including the Inner Harbor and a University of Maryland Downtown Campus then under discussion.⁵⁹⁴

Though patterned after the Gruen plan for Fort Worth, Charles Center reflected the emergence of a bifurcated response to that plan and to downtown renewal more broadly. The pedestrian mall represented one course of action, but it relied on the coordination and sophistication of downtown merchants, something often lacking, especially in small and mid-sized cities. The urban megaprojects, embodied by Midtown Plaza, Charles Center, and the Prudential Center, represented a second response. Public-private mixed-use developments served as catalysts for downtown renewal and were in many cases planned as surrogates for comprehensive CBD planning (as in Midtown and Charles Center). In the Charles Center case, the plan was quickly followed up by a second report, the 1959 *Plan for the Central Business District of Baltimore*. Of the Baltimore CBD Plan, Clyde Browning wrote in 1961, “the Baltimore CBD Plan... excels in the imagination of its proposals, the thoroughness of details (135 pages on a 10-by 14-inch format), the comprehensive coverage of the many facets of the CBD, and the visual delight of an extremely attractive presentation. The Plan presents a balanced blend of inventory, analysis, and design. This is especially true if the CBD Plan is taken together with its sister publication, *Charles Center*.”⁵⁹⁵

592 *Charles Center*, 20.

593 *Ibid.*, 22.

594 *Ibid.*, 28.

595 Browning, “Recent Studies of Central Business Districts,” 85.

If Kalamazoo demonstrated the basic viability of the pedestrian mall for small merchants on Main Street, the Charles Center plan, along with Midtown Plaza in Rochester, demonstrated how the basic tenets of Gruen's Fort Worth plan could translate into large-scale urban renewal. While few assumed the scale of the whole downtown (with the notable exception of Pei's Plan for Oklahoma City, to be discussed in Chapter Five), these projects were predicated on the assumption that smaller sites could serve as a catalyst for larger renewal. Charles Center's deliberate imitation of Gruen's Fort Worth Plan, moreover, reflected the degree of influence that it had as a vision for downtown. Though Charles Center would ultimately emerge as the more viable redevelopment model for cities, a second plan and project, Gruen's Fresno plan and Fulton Mall, demonstrates the continued evolution of Gruen's pedestrianization scheme following Fort Worth and Kalamazoo.

Plan Reading: Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation.

Among Gruen's best-known plans and his most successful projects was the 1960 *Central Area Fresno: Volume 2: the Plan and its Implementation*.⁵⁹⁶ Though undermined by later policy decisions, the Fresno plan represented the crystallization of Gruen's downtown planning efforts. Realized in 1964 as the Fulton Mall and designed by the landscape architect Garrett Eckbo, the Fresno project catalyzed a second wave of major pedestrian mall projects, won a HUD award for design excellence, and became a model for civic beautification in the Johnson administration. A promotional film about the project produced by Victor Gruen Associates, "A City Reborn," was shown at the White House in 1968 before an audience including then-first lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson. While the plan won accolades upon its opening, its gradual demise beginning in the 1970s and the recent conflict over its removal serve as an important exhibition of the tensions manifested by pedestrian malls in the United States.

Central Area Fresno: Factual Reading

Gruen's plan for Fresno differed from his other projects in that it consisted of three individual scales and phases as opposed to a single downtown plan. Gruen and Fresno had "worked out a unique three-part contract that would relate immediate development problems with the question of long-term growth of the city in its region."⁵⁹⁷ The first phase began with

596 Gary Hack and others have cited Fresno plan as Gruen's best work. Conversation with Gary Hack, former Head of Planning, Gruen Associates, New York Office.

597 Wall, 154.

4.32

Illustrative Site Plan of Central Area
*Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The
Plan and its Implementation* (1960).
Victor Gruen Associates.
Credit: Crawford Westbrook
Collection, MIT Libraries



a regional analysis of the central area (the frame) of approximately 2000 acres. The second phase zoomed into a “core” superblock of 80 acres downtown. The third phase consisted of a 36.5 acre designated urban renewal area referred to as “Central Business District Project One.” This would eventually serve as a basis for the pedestrian mall designed by Garrett Eckbo of the landscape architecture firm Eckbo, Dean & Williams of San Francisco. For the purpose of this investigation, the second volume of the plan, published in January 1960, will provide the basis for the plan reading. Three actors—the City, the downtown redevelopment agency, and merchants association, known as Fresno’s Hundred Percenters (later the Downtown Development Association)—came together to finance the plan and resulting projects, ensuring the kind of cooperation that had been lacking at Fort Worth. In contrast to Midtown Plaza, however, the Fresno plan relied heavily on federal urban renewal funds, which accounted for approximately 70 percent of the total project costs of \$1.9 million.⁵⁹⁸

The Fresno plan began with a full black and white aerial photograph of the city with the “central area boundary” bounded by an abstract elliptical geometry, inlaid by translucent overlays of the “core superblock” and the “redevelopment project area” (project one). The plan presented the problem of Fresno’s future in familiar terms. “The historical and commercial dominance of the center of the city,” it read, “is threatened

598 Wall, 154-155.

by overdevelopment of suburban facilities: a deterioration of areas adjacent to downtown has spread its paralyzing influence over a large portion of the central areas, and the common problem of inadequate traffic and parking facilities are very much in evidence.”⁵⁹⁹

Gruen’s introduction to the plan recognized outright those forces which had undermined his success elsewhere and directly referenced how this plan would “pave the way for the first early and successful accomplishment of total central area renewal.” The same could not have been said of Fort Worth, which had only “served to formulate the fundamental planning principles for downtown renewal.”⁶⁰⁰ The Fresno plan stated at the outset that “joint sponsorship...[by] all the leading elements of the community...constitutes the best insurance against partisan opposition that could jeopardize adoption and implementation.”⁶⁰¹ According to the introduction, Victor Gruen Associates had initiated work in October 1958 and submitted the first volume of the plan, laying out its basic objectives in April 1959. The urban renewal plan was completed in September 1959 and thereafter sent to the Urban Renewal Administration officers in San Francisco, during which time Gruen’s staff edited the plan for a November 1959 presentation to its key stakeholders.

Unlike Gruen’s plan for Fort Worth, which included only one diagram showing the relationship between the city and its region, along with an acknowledgement of the challenge and competition presented by Dallas, the Fresno plan situated the city in its state, regional, and metropolitan context.⁶⁰² While acknowledging the challenge faced by the city’s fast growing suburbs,⁶⁰³ the plan also called on Fresno’s leaders to “compete...with Los Angeles and San Francisco for its share of the far west’s growth.”⁶⁰⁴ Added to this regional outlook was a platform of five key objectives. Interestingly, whereas Gruen’s earlier plans had highlighted the physical program for the city as the core objective, here those measures were consolidated into a single point. The four other objectives showed a newfound diversity in the firm’s approach to downtown. These included the diversification of activities and the economic base in the central area; the formulation of a plan for physical rehabilitation and expansion; the control of obsolescence; and the formulation of a phasing program.⁶⁰⁵ The

599 Victor Gruen Associates. *Central Area Fresno, California, Volume 2: the Plan and its Implementation, for city of Fresno, Fresno’s Hundred Percenters, Redevelopment Agency of the city of Fresno* (Fresno, CA: January 1960), 3.

600 Gruen, *Fresno*, 3.

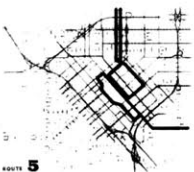
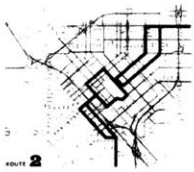
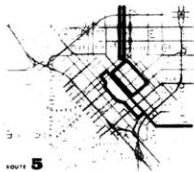
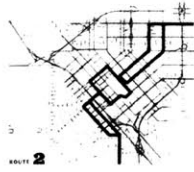
601 Ibid, Ibid.

602 Ibid, 6.

603 See Wall, 151. This challenge was underscored by the recent departure from downtown of Sears Roebuck & Co. in 1956 and the opening of a new shopping center 6 miles outside of downtown.

604 Gruen, *Fresno*, 7.

605 Ibid, 7.



4.33

Proposed Bus Routes for the Central Area. *Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation* (1960). Victor Gruen Associates. Credit: Crawford Westbrook Collection, MIT Libraries

timeframe set for the plan was, as at Kalamazoo, 1980, rather than 1970, which had proven an unrealistic horizon for Fort Worth. Gruen retained the Western Real Estate Research Corporation to conduct an analysis of the downtown area population and buying power. The economic prognosis was bleak—“without revitalization the share of sales going to the central area would steadily decrease until by 1980 the area would only capture 6.1% of total trade area...sales annually.”⁶⁰⁶

As a reaction to the failures at Fort Worth, one area where Gruen’s plan for Fresno proved especially proactive was in highway planning. Edgardo Contini, once again the partner-in-charge on the project, believed that Fresno’s downtown revitalization would hinge on realigning its north-south and east-west freeway routes to circumscribe the central area.⁶⁰⁷ Fearing that the loops proposed by the state would shift the center of retail gravity away from downtown, Contini advocated for a smaller loop then under consideration by the Fresno-Clovis Planning Commission, and presented that option to the California Division of Highways. They eventually adopted that alternative.⁶⁰⁸ Contini also drafted a specific traffic plan for downtown that utilized one-way pairs to increase capacity and allow for easier turning movements. Inscribed within the main loop, the plan designed for a series of inner loops to enable circulation around key retail areas and other land uses. The traffic plan for Fresno eschewed the total separation proposed at Fort Worth in favor of a less costly proposal, which enhanced access to the key retail areas without pedestrianizing the entire downtown. In keeping with this pragmatism, the illustrative site plans for the central area and the superblock⁶⁰⁹ dedicated far more land to surface parking than at Fort Worth, again a reflection of the challenges faced in creating expensive multi-level structures. The Fresno plan did not try to recreate Northland downtown, as Gruen had at Kalamazoo, but attempted, for the first time, to forge a complete and pragmatic proposal for the complex land uses of the core area.

This illustrative site plan for Fresno consisted of three main areas circumscribed by a loop highway, with several specialized zones indicated in the plan. Fresno would have a high density, medium density, and low-density area, and within that, a commercial zone, civic center, convention hall, medical complex, and institutional complex, as well as residential areas and areas for industry, wholesaling and warehousing.⁶¹⁰ Different land uses were presented throughout the plan using Gruen’s signature eye-level

606 Gruen, *Fresno*, 8.

607 *Ibid.*, 10-11.

608 See Wall, 155. “Fresno Mall Gives a Small City New Heart,” *Engineering News Record*, January 12, 1967. AHCVGC box 37.

609 Gruen, *Fresno*, 15.

610 *Ibid.*, 16.



vignettes, here drawn by Ben Althen, who had played a central role in the delineation of the Fort Worth plan under Carlos Diniz. Rather than focus the illustration of the plan on the pedestrian mall alone, the Fresno plan used a series of six eye-level vignette drawings to show various aspects of the scheme, including an approach to downtown along the highway; new residential developments with rehabilitated older housing; a revamped civic center area; an expanded medical complex; portions of older commercial areas; and industrial facilities adjacent to the city's railways.⁶¹¹

After presenting the main features of the entire central area, the plan zoomed into the core superblock. In the superblock, a roughly rectangular high-density area, the plan proposed “a system of pedestrian malls and plazas from which all vehicles except small, slow-moving “pedestrians” (similar to those at Disneyland or in World’s Fairs) would be excluded.”⁶¹² The superblock proposal represented a much-scaled down version of what Gruen had proposed for Fort Worth. It included a main pedestrian mall spine on Fulton Street bisected by five “cross-malls” with approximately 3000 parking spaces in perimeter parking lots. For service, the plan recommended a series of one-way alleys, in addition to pick-up drop-off areas for taxis and short-term parking. The superblock connected to the central bus terminal via an elevated pedestrian walkway at the north

4.34

Core Superblock of Central Area
Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation (1960).
 Victor Gruen Associates.
 Credit: Crawford Westbrook
 Collection, MIT Libraries

⁶¹¹ Gruen, *Fresno*, 20-23.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 26-27.

4.35, 4.36, 4.37

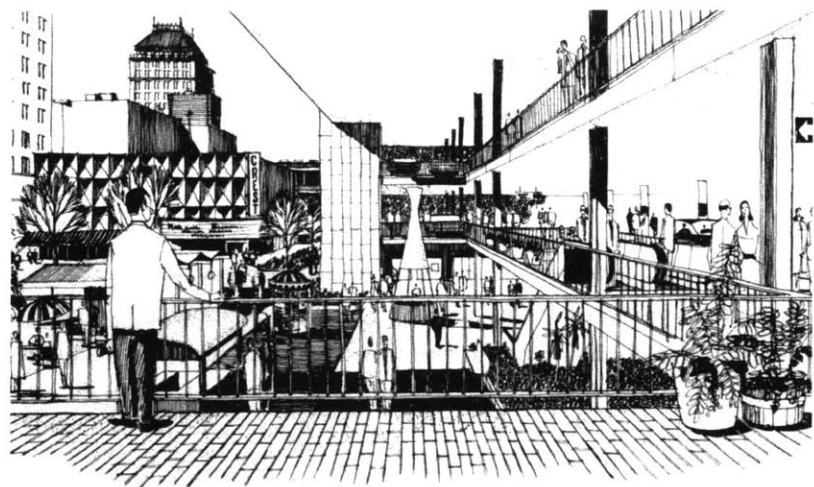
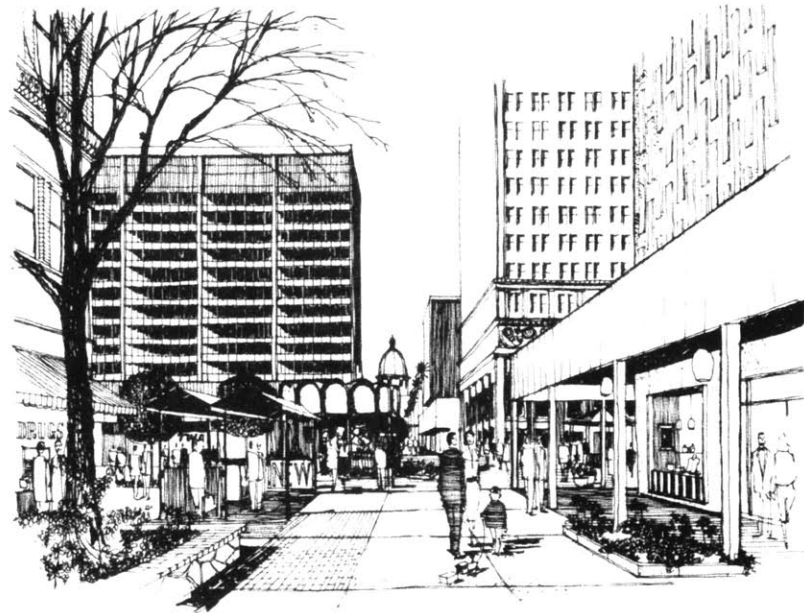
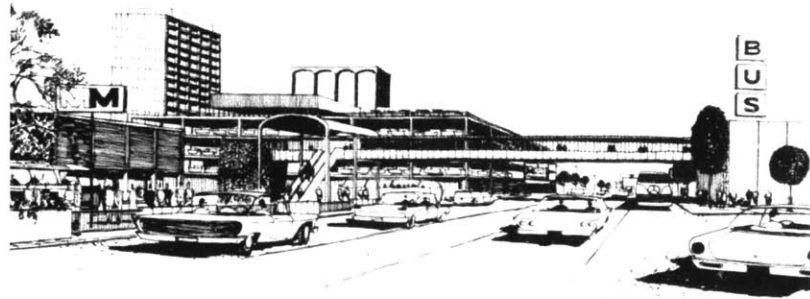
Serial Narrative

top: The Bus Terminal and Perimeter Roadway

middle: Feeder to the Fulton Mall

bottom: Balcony overlooking Mariposa Plaza

Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation (1960). Victor Gruen Associates. Credit: Crawford Westbrook Collection, MIT Libraries



end of the site and also provided for the potential of a heliport to offer direct access to the downtown.⁶¹³

The scale of the Fresno core superblock followed the same logic Gruen used elsewhere, yet articulated that logic at a secondary scale. With the freeway loop ringing the central area, a less invasive and costly arterial system could provide access around the core within the framework of the existing grid. Rather than turn the entire downtown into a World's Fair, as he had tried to do at Fort Worth, or to turn downtown into a shopping center, as he had done for Kalamazoo, Gruen here toed a middle line, creating a high-density retail core within the framework of a comprehensive plan made up of a careful arrangement of land use districts.

In keeping with his multi-scalar approach to the plan, Gruen illustrated the core superblocks using a second series of six superblock vignettes. The first of these illustrations showed the back end of the superblock from a moving car. The landscaped roadway here served the role of an access or feeder route enabling access into the core much as Gruen's access roads did into his regional shopping malls. Along the perimeter, a pleasant, park-like setting, a remnant of George Nelson's greenbelt for Syracuse,⁶¹⁴ was proposed, with "pedes-trains" picking up passengers to ferry them into the center. A second perimeter illustration, from the access road, showed the connection from the bus terminal to the downtown, which passed through a massive parking deck structure into the pedestrianized downtown. The third, fourth and fifth renderings of the plan bring the audience into the tranquility of the center.

Once inside the pedestrian core, a third illustration depicts a man, who, having only just left his car in the garage, prepares to descend an escalator into the downtown. He pauses first to gaze at the public life below, including a public monument similar to one designed for Southdale (and also featured in the Fort Worth proposal), a historic landmark skyscraper, and the city's downtown department store. On the main floor of the plaza, the scene shifts towards one of the city's cross street malls, at Fulton and Mariposa streets, where a couple with a child are walking in the direction of the Fulton Mall. The city's familiar courthouse may be glimpsed in the distance, its landmark dome visible amidst a collection of new modern skyscrapers. The by-then common elements of downtown renewal appear in the scene, including an arcade along the sidewalk, a merry-go-round, planter benches, kiosks, and sidewalk cafes.

The final, iconic image of the plan shows the primary mall at Fulton Street. The caption accompanying the image reads, "This long mall

613 Gruen, *Fresno*, 27.

614 Refer to George Nelson's 194X Syracuse plan from 1943 discussed in Chapter 2.



4.38

View of the Fulton Mall.
Central Area Fresno, Volume 2: The Plan and its Implementation (1960).
 Victor Gruen Associates.

Credit: Crawford Westbrook
 Collection, MIT Libraries

is broken into a series of related spaces and plazas by varying building lines and by the low structures constructed in the mall.⁶¹⁵ The illustration looks out onto the mall from a lush planter bed. In the foreground is a man smoking a pipe and reading the newspaper. Behind him, a covered sidewalk café on an elevated platform plays host to a pair of couples having a drink. An image of the Eiffel Tower is visible on the wall of the restaurant. To the man's left, a chance encounter is had between a couple and a man carrying a box from J.C. Penney's. J.C. Penney's itself lies just behind them in the background, beneath a mature tree shading a children's playground. Further back in the scene, a pedes-train carries passengers along the mall. Other kiosks and small architectural follies are visible in the distance—an art exhibit, a photo booth, a modern bandstand. Fresno's iconic Pacific Southwest Building, built in 1925, looms in the distance, an orienting device in the modernized skyline.

In comparison to the plan for Fort Worth, the Fresno plan advanced the graphic imagery of the Gruen scheme in certain respects

615 Gruen, *Fresno*, 30.

and regressed in others. Illustrations here employed a variation of Gordon Cullen's serial vision, married to an indirect narrative approach that tried to show the various components and vantage points of the scheme through a pictorial journey. Unlike Fort Worth, however, these illustrations were done in black and white, with only a single full-page spread. Detailed black and white aerial perspectives, like those prepared by Carlos Diniz for Fort Worth, were not included, either for lack of funds or perhaps because they might have undermined by the project by being both too specific and too vague at the same time. The impressionistic vignettes done by Althen sufficed here as a means of garnering support for the plan, without spelling out each an every detail of its architectural form.

The last section of the Fresno Plan provides a basic overview and preliminary schematic for "Central Business District Project One," a designated urban renewal are of the core superblock that was marked for clearance and rehabilitation.⁶¹⁶ The project area was divided into a series of 24 "disposition parcels," most of it designated for either large scale parking structures, new modern buildings, or other amenities. Together, these would be completed over the next five to seven years. Federal aid would provide funds for land acquisition, clearance, and improvement and then leave the marketing of the cleared parcels to the redevelopment agency.⁶¹⁷

As a comprehensive plan for the city, rather than a retail strategy for the "mallng" of downtown alone, Gruen's plan touched upon every major aspect affecting the central area, including zoning, emergency vehicle routes, public transportation, and imminent plans for the civic center and conventional hall. The plan provided maps of the nine major bus routes servicing downtown, as well as detailed phasing recommendations and a chapter on implementation. Having learned their lesson from Fort Worth, Gruen's team here provided considerable detail on the matter of implementation. The appendix includes twenty notes on how to construct parking facilities downtown though private enterprise, joint public-private action, or by governmental authority, with examples culled from cities around the United States. Though the initial plan suggested that the creation of a pedestrian mall could be justified by "the police power,"⁶¹⁸ citing four relevant legal cases, later that year, the State passed the California Mall Law Act of 1960, which provided legal cover for municipalities wanting to build pedestrian malls. The fight for the act was led, however, not by Fresno, but by Pomona, California, which lobbied

616 Gruen, *Fresno*, 32.

617 *Ibid.*, 32.

618 *Ibid.*, 58.

the California legislature to enact a procedure by which cities could legally create pedestrian malls without abandoning their public interest in the right-of-way or suffering legal challenges from disenchanted merchants.⁶¹⁹

Central Area Fresno: Contextual Reading

Situated in California's San Joaquin Valley between Los Angeles and San Francisco, Fresno emerged as a major center of California's agricultural economy throughout the twentieth century. The city's first comprehensive plan, completed in 1918 by the planner Charles H. Cheney and discussed in Chapter One, had focused on the potential for early zoning controls and the predicament of poorly planned rail infrastructure.⁶²⁰ Cheney's plan mirrored other features common to city plans of that era, including a Civic Center proposal with a reflecting pool in front of the main courthouse, and a parks and boulevards system illustrated at the regional scale. Though much of Cheney's plan would go unimplemented over the coming decades,⁶²¹ it was rediscovered and reprinted by the Fresno-Clovis Planning Commission in 1956. The Fresno-Clovis Planning Commission, the first area commission formed in California,⁶²² reflected a regional ideology sorely needed in the post-war suburban boom of the 1950s.⁶²³

In 1957, planners at the commission adopted a "Preliminary General Plan for the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area," which among other items called for a mall that would close down Mariposa Street leading to the historic county courthouse, a provision that seems to have been loosely adapted from Cheney's original civic center scheme in 1918.⁶²⁴ The General Plan proved so controversial at the time of its release that the president of the Manchester Shopping Center outside of downtown Fresno, C.A. Bergfield, threatened to sue for an injunction of its release.⁶²⁵ At the same time, downtown business owners, concerned about losing out to the suburbs, consolidated their interests by forming the Fresno Hundred Percenters, a downtown business association of merchants and property owners in the core. Victor Gruen was brought to Fresno under a joint contract between the city's redevelopment agency and the Hundred Percenters. Over the next two years, working under a grant from the Urban Renewal Administration (a predecessor to HUD), Gruen and his team

619 Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo. *Banning the car downtown. Selected American Cities.* (Institute for Environmental Action: No. HUD/PDR-192/3, 1976), 72.

620 Cheney. *Progress of a City Plan for Fresno.* 1918.

621 John Edward Powell. "The Fresno Civic Center: An Architectural History," Accessed April, 2016, <http://historicfresno.org/civic.htm>.

622 The area commission was the equivalent of a metropolitan planning organization or regional commission elsewhere.

623 "Fresno Area Regional City Seen by Planner." *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1957.

624 "Redevelopment Sought for Downtown Fresno: City Bid for Planning Funds Brings Injunction Threat from Rival Center." *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1957.

625 "Redevelopment Sought," Ibid.

prepared their plan for the central area.

After being adopted in 1960, however, Gruen's plan encountered several setbacks. The lack of enabling legislation prior to the passage of the mall law protracted implementation. The city had to establish an assessment district⁶²⁶ for those benefitted by the project and expand the official boundaries of the redevelopment project area.⁶²⁷ Plans for the freeway alignments and financing of parking structures needed to be detailed and agreed upon before other plans could move forward.⁶²⁸ Yet by 1963, the city was ready to move forward the pedestrianization of nine blocks of Fulton Street, the initial phase of the superblock that would be carried out in accordance with the Gruen Plan.⁶²⁹

Gruen engaged the landscape architect Garrett Eckbo, of Eckbo, Dean and Williams, to design the first phase of the mall. In Eckbo's design for the mall, "echoes of the region's agricultural topography arise in alternating bands of stained and unstained concrete in wavy patterns," reflecting "symbols of the San Joaquin Valley."⁶³⁰ Eckbo, a native of California, had been educated in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. In the 1940s, he, along with classmates Daniel Kiley and James Rose, helped to initiate and lead the emergence of modern landscape design, which shifted the profession from the Beaux Arts tradition of landscape design towards one with a more social agenda, which the profession had largely ceded to city planning as the disciplines diverged in the 1920s.

At the time of its completion, Eckbo's design for the mall could only have compared in scope with Morris Lapidus' scheme for Lincoln Road Mall in Miami Beach. A serpentine paving pattern gave way to intermittent clusters of benches, plantings, and fountains, as well as small pavilions and kiosks. The artwork for the mall took a cue from Gruen's program for Northland in Minneapolis and included an iconic 60-foot clock tower designed by Jan de Swart, curvilinear fountains by the Fresno-based sculptor Stan Bitters, bronze works by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Tony Rosenthal, and George Tsutakawa, along with a polished bronze and

626 Many pedestrian malls lived or died on the passing of an assessment district to fund their implementation. Sacramento, for example, endured a vicious battle between the city council, mayor, and downtown merchants over the passing of an assessment district, another sign of how downtown's fragmentary property ownership challenged implementation.

627 Victor Gruen Associates. *Fresno and the Mall: A Story of Community Action* (Fresno, CA: Victor Gruen Associates, 1964), 9.

628 The project's delays, of course, reflected just the kind of long range planning that Gruen had hoped for. The fact that the mall was implemented only after all of its supporting elements had been put in place, represented a model scenario.

629 A revised plan for the core superblock published in *Fresno and the Mall* in 1964 showed the evolution and elaboration of the initial concept. The revised scheme shows a series of major multi-level parking structures, five cross-malls and the construction of a loop access road.

630 Mimi Zeiger. "Fresno V. Eckbo," *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 104.12 (2014): 104-117.

4.39

Fulton Mall Bird's Eye View

Credit: *Central City Malls*, Harvey Rubenstein, 1978.



cast aluminum work by Peter Voulkos and mosaic benches done by local artists.⁶³¹ Trees planted along the mall included Chinese elms, Canary Island pines, oaks, magnolias, crape myrtles, olives, and pistachio and fig trees.⁶³² Pedes-trains ferried weary shoppers down the nine-block corridor.

Upon opening, the mall instantly became a benchmark in downtown planning and revitalization. Then-governor of California Edmund G. (Pat) Brown delivered the keynote address at its opening on September 1, 1964. In his speech, he predicted that people would come “from all over the country to see this bold and beautiful new look in American cities...Above and beyond what this pioneering effort means to Fresno, its stands as evidence to the entire nation that one of our greatest problems can be successfully met and solved. I refer to the problem of our cities.”⁶³³ Not only did the mall bring to fruition the promise of Gruen’s Fort Worth plan after eight years, it also represented a triumph for the convergence of urban renewal, regional planning, and downtown revitalization. Beyond the mall, Fresno had undertaken comprehensive action towards modernization, including the construction of several new skyscrapers, a modern County Courthouse to replace the aging domed

631 Zeiger, *Ibid.*

632 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

633 California Governor Edmund G. Brown’s keynote address at the opening ceremony for the Fulton Mall, September 1, 1964 as quoted in Peter H. King. “Fresno: Rise and Fall of Urban Mall.” *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1988.

structure (which not been slated for demolition in the Gruen plan), as well as a new convention center and parking garage directly off the mall. An article on Fresno's modernization from May 3, 1964 stated that it was "all in step with...that elaborate and detailed master program...set up by Victor Gruen and Associates...six years ago."⁶³⁴ In a promotional pamphlet released to coincide with the mall's opening and recount the tale of its evolution, Fresno exuded confidence in its future. "In the never-ending climb which is the process of a city realizing its greatness," it read, "Fresno has scaled steep and difficult cliffs. Perhaps now the climb ahead will ease for a time, but there will still be many difficulties along the way and leadership must not falter."⁶³⁵

Central Area Fresno: Temporal Reading

But falter it did. Despite \$19.3 million dollars of new investment between 1964 and 1967 and over \$800,000 worth of building permits issued in the central area after the mall's opening, the forces of decentralization gaining ground since the end of WWII continued unabated. Less than two years after the mall's opening, Fresno's City Council approved a developer's proposal to build a massive indoor shopping mall, the Fashion Fair mall, at the northern boundary of Fresno's suburban growth.⁶³⁶ Though the Mayor initially rejected the proposal, citing a commitment to downtown Fresno's future, after "intense lobbying and political maneuvering"⁶³⁷ as well as an election cycle, the project gained approval. Politicians, who were convinced that the mall (along with its jobs and tax dollars) would go to the nearby city of Clovis if it were not approved by the city, relented.

In 1970, only two years after the mall had been cited as a model for urban redevelopment, Fashion Fair opened. Montgomery Ward's downtown department store location closed and moved north shortly thereafter. Macy's moved into Fashion Fair. Only Gottschalk's Department Store, which itself had a new location in the northern suburbs, retained a downtown branch. Former Mayor Floyd Hyde, who went on to become undersecretary of HUD in the Nixon Administration after his tenure in Fresno, looked back on Fresno's experience with mixed feelings. "Plans are dangerous," Hyde said as part of a 1988 interview on the mall. "Once they get all printed up and with all those fancy colors and all that, nobody wants to change them—and yet the development of a city, like a person, is a changing one. And if you can't zig and zag now and then, you are



4.40, 4.41

Fulton Mall, 1964

Credit: G.E. Kidder Smith Image Collection, MIT Libraries

634 Tom Cameron. "Fresno Modernizing its Downtown Area." *The Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 1964.

635 Gruen, *Fresno and the Mall*, 16.

636 Peter King. "Fresno: Rise and Fall of Urban Mall," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1988.

637 King, *Ibid.*

4.42

Fulton Mall Opening Ceremony,
September 7, 1964.

Credit: The Fresno Bee



going to be stuck with some real problems.”⁶³⁸ Garrett Eckbo, revisiting the mall in a 1986 article for *Landscape Architecture* magazine wrote, “It may be asking too much of environmental design to improve economic health. As the socio-economic level of the actual or desired participants goes up, the quality of the spaces and facilities rises parallel to it. When we improve quality in low-grade situations we naturally expect the quality of participation to rise too. Whether, and if so, how, this works may be one of the enduring mysteries of urbanism.”⁶³⁹

Fresno’s Fulton Mall, which was realized eight years after Gruen’s plan for Fort Worth, marked a turning point for both urban renewal and for the pedestrian mall. It was, in retrospect, the peak before the trough. At its opening in 1964, the Fulton Mall marked only the fifth permanent pedestrian mall ever constructed in the United States,⁶⁴⁰ following Kalamazoo, Miami Beach, Knoxville, and Pomona. The downtown megaprojects, of which Midtown Plaza in Rochester, Penn Center in Philadelphia, Charles Center in Baltimore, the Prudential Center in Boston, and Constitution Plaza in Hartford had been built, were just gaining momentum. The next ten years, from 1964 to 1974, would mark one of the most tumultuous and formative periods in the history of the American city and would change both the character and the perception of downtown renewal. The proactive business coalitions and renewal authorities that had sprung up to “save” the core in the late 1950s would by the mid-1960s become increasingly associated with its destruction at the whims of the federal bulldozer. Even so, over the ensuing decade, the

638 King, *Ibid.*

639 Garret Eckbo. “Fresno-Mall Revisited.” *Landscape Architecture* 76.6 (1986): 56.

640 This excludes the temporary mall experiments of the late 1950s and after.



4.43

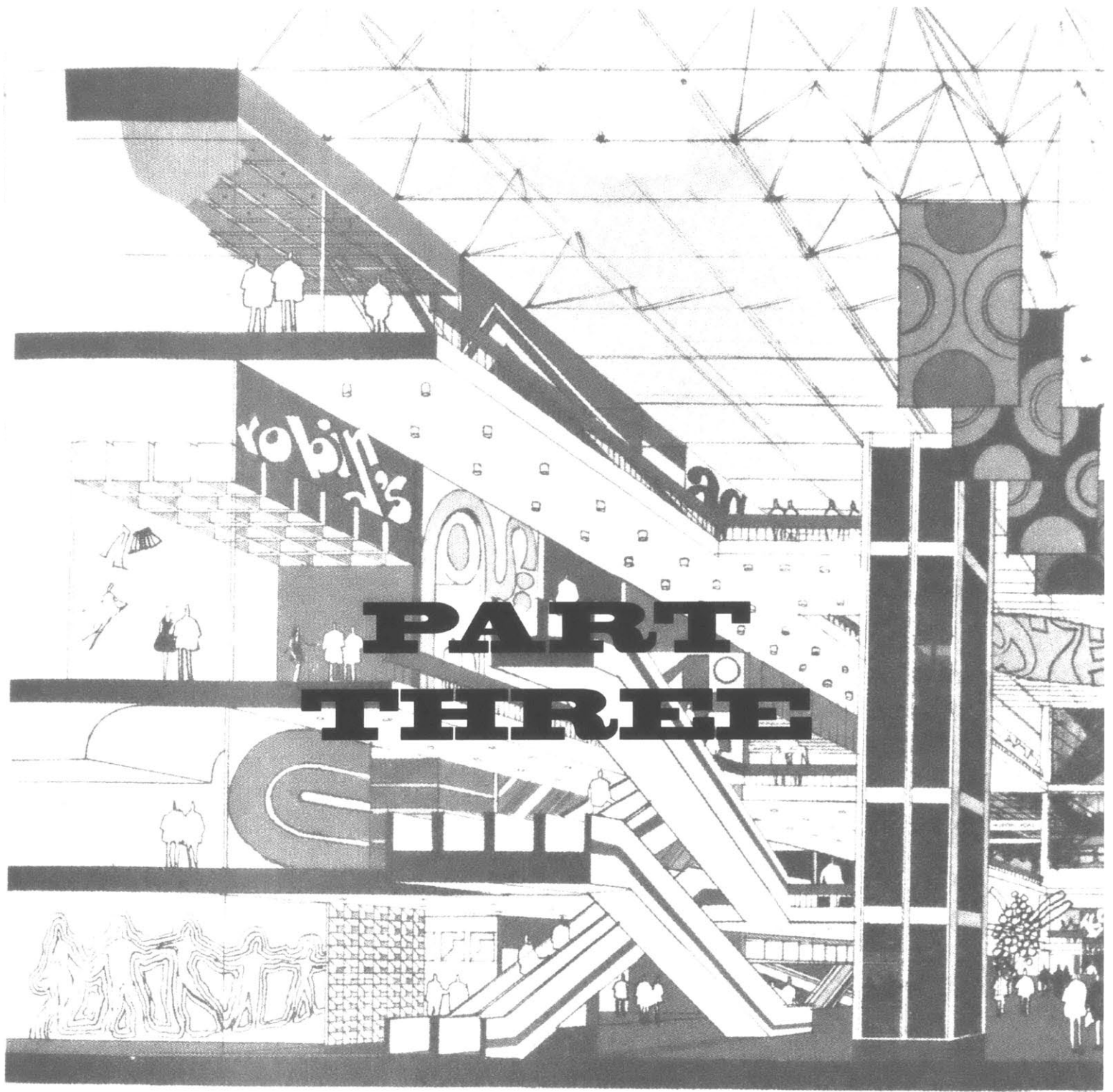
Fulton Mall Reconstruction
Groundbreaking, March 3, 2016.
Credit: *The Fresno Bee*

pedestrian mall would remain a persistent part of almost every downtown proposal and almost 200 would eventually be built.

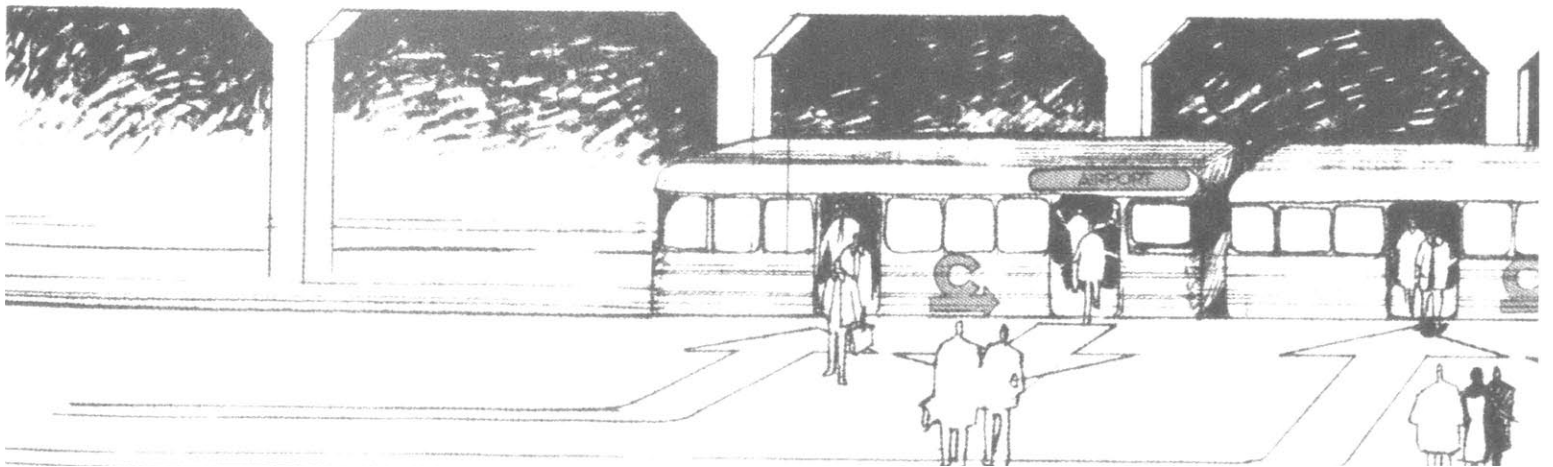
In 2016, over 50 years after opening, Fresno's City Council voted to restore traffic to Fulton Street in Fresno. In spite of protests of preservationists, "sentimentalists, antique lovers, and status-quo preservers"⁶⁴¹ calling for the mall's designation as a modernist landmark—as well as a protest that tried to stop the mall's demolition using California's robust environmental laws—the city, with the ardent support of its Mayor Ashley Swearengin, engineered the political and business clout to reopen the mall to traffic. In a surreal gesture of political symbolism, the Mayor and key stakeholders began the demolition of the mall in front a photograph of the mall's original groundbreaking in 1964.⁶⁴²

641 McMurry, "Market Square," 62.

642 Marc Benjamin. "Fulton Mall Groundbreaking Raises Hopes of Revitalizing Fresno," *The Fresno Bee*, February 7, 2016.



PART THREE





Part III: The Evolving Urban Renewal Order: I.M. Pei, David Wallace, and James Rouse

The third part of this thesis focuses on the period from 1964 to 1974. These final two chapters look at urban renewal, the controversy, and the aftermath, focusing on how changing policies, design ideas, and actors shaped the scope and orientation of downtown plans during the late urban renewal era. Chapter Five considers the work of two influential plan makers from the late 1960s and 1970s, I.M. Pei and Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (WMRT). Using Pei's 1964 plan for the Central Business District of Oklahoma City and WMRT's plan for downtown Buffalo, this section traces the evolution of downtown plans in the 1960s and early 1970s, when the policies of urban renewal came sharply into question. The critique of the urban renewal order has been discussed at length in other works and will not be a primary focus here. Instead, this analysis will, through case studies and plan readings, attempt to unpack each plan in relation to its historical context. Chapter Six shifts focus from plans to projects, looking at the pedestrian malls built in the late 1960s and 1970s. Part III closes with an in-depth discussion of the emergence of festival marketplaces and the figure of James Rouse, who played a prominent role in story of downtown renewal from the 1940s through the 1980s.

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CHAPTER FIVE





THE ELABORATION OF THE PLAN
THE PEI PLAN FOR OKLAHOMA CITY
AND WMRT'S REGIONAL CENTER PLAN FOR BUFFALO

“The fundamental reasons for the retail center’s failure are threefold. First, the plans could not address the fundamental market conditions that had eroded. Further, they never got political support, and finally, they hung on to the increasingly obsolete concept of a major shopping center as the nucleus for the area’s use.”⁶⁴³

- David Wallace, *Urban Planning My Way* (2004)

Downtown Revitalization and the Urban Renewal Record

In his rebuke of the urban renewal program published in 1965, titled “The Federal Bulldozer,” Martin Anderson reflected upon the initial aims of the Housing Act of 1949.

“...eliminate substandard and other inadequate housing through clearance of slums and blighted areas;...stimulate sufficient housing production and community development to remedy the housing shortage;...realize the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.”⁶⁴⁴

With the passage of the Housing Act in 1949, says Anderson “Congress clearly indicated that the clearance and redevelopment of blighted areas was a national objective, that private enterprise could not do it alone, that public power to assemble land was necessary, and that the public costs should be shared by Federal and Local Governments.”⁶⁴⁵ What began as a large-scale slum clearance program oriented towards eliminating substandard housing, however, by the mid-1960s had transformed into a bloated redevelopment program whose scope and tenor had veered from its initial purpose. In the shift from slum clearance to urban renewal, a new type of urban actor emerged to shepherd large-scale redevelopment

5.1

(previous page)

Tower City, Cleveland, Architects:
Dalton-Dalton-Little-Newport
Credit: *The New Downtons*, Louis G.
Redstone, 1976

5.2

(opposite)

The Inner Harbor Plan, Baltimore
Illustrated by Thomas A. Todd
Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd
Credit: *Presentation Drawings by*
American Architects, Alfred Kemper,
1977

643 Wallace, *Urban Planning My Way*, 251.

644 Martin Anderson. “The Federal Bulldozer” in *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy* ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), 492.

645 William L. Slayton. “Achievements of the Urban Renewal Program” in *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*. ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), 192.

projects. While some of these projects effectively replaced blighted housing districts with new and higher quality places to live, far more destroyed neighborhoods and communities at the edge of downtown to catalyze redevelopment, clear a barrier to investment, or to facilitate highway access into the core from the suburbs. By the mid-1960s, not only had the character of urban renewal changed, so too had its core objectives and outcomes.⁶⁴⁶

To trace this shift and the impact that it had on the downtown landscape, it is critical to first understand the origins of the program as well as the incremental policy shifts that changed its character over time. The basic tenets of the federal housing program were first borne out in the New Deal of the 1930s, when the federal government built its first federally subsidized public housing. In the first hundred days of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's term in office, Congress passed the Home Owners Loan Act⁶⁴⁷ to relieve new homeowners of crushing debt and to alleviate the risk of falling behind on their mortgages. Under the Public Works Administrator Harold Ickes, the Roosevelt administration established a Housing Division in 1934, under which it built the nation's first federally financed low-rise housing projects.⁶⁴⁸ The Housing Act of 1937 enshrined what had been emergency relief efforts into federal policy. Most of these projects were low-rise, one-to-two story housing projects that sat on the grounds of former slums. Planners tended to regard the housing program with some skepticism, since these projects were often implemented with scant regard to the city's preexisting comprehensive plans and often excluded the city planning commission from its own planning apparatus.⁶⁴⁹

The second stage of federal involvement in housing came in the form of the Resettlement Administration's New Towns program of the late 1930s under Rexford Tugwell. The new town program aimed to build a series of greenbelt communities that "put houses and land and people together in such a way that the props under our economic and social structure will be permanently strengthened."⁶⁵⁰ The program served largely "to present an alternative to the haphazard, speculative growth-by-accretion that had long characterized American urban areas," much as the later wartime housing at Linda Vista and Willow Run showcased an alternative

646 For a thorough critique of urban renewal's excesses in the period, see *Downtown Inc.*, Chapter 3 and *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed by James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966).

647 A provision for the construction of low-income housing was also included in the National Industry Recovery Act.

648 Among the projects built in this period were the Williamsburg Houses in Brooklyn, New York (1936-1938) and Butler Place (1938) in Fort Worth, Texas.

649 Scott, 331-32.

650 Rexford Tugwell as quoted in Scott, 337.

concept for communities and town centers.⁶⁵¹

Sweeping federal housing legislation passed in the midst of post-war planning efforts that had begun to gain momentum in the mid-1940s. The housing bill, first introduced in 1945, provided the basic structure of urban renewal as a series of title programs. The most important of these with respect to urban renewal were Title I, which created the National Housing Agency;⁶⁵² Title II, which provided funds for research on housing and community development, as well as financing for local planning; Title III, which extended aid to privately financed housing; Title VI, which offered aid for “land assembly for participation by private enterprise in development or redevelopment programs;” and Title VII, which “continued the public housing program and expanded it by authorizing the rehabilitation of older buildings for use of low-income families.” Policymakers were resolute in their conviction that the housing program be used for housing alone, and though the bill they wrote provided for “urban redevelopment” as well as housing, the demolition of private businesses and other non-residential enterprises for commercial or industrial construction violated the principles of the act.⁶⁵³

The response to the Housing Act of 1949 proved “discouragingly slow and disappointing” to many of its champions.⁶⁵⁴ Before they could condemn property and rebuild, many state and cities had to authorize urban renewal through skeptical state legislatures, create redevelopment authorities to carry out these projects, and draft plans for sites that could actually take advantage of the federal funds. Many state legislatures, in a reflection of similar debates that had precluded the adoption of zoning legislation in the 1920s, questioned the constitutionality of federal slum clearance and redevelopment, something that would not be resolved by the courts until the *Berman v. Parker* decision upholding the District of Columbia Redevelopment Act was decided by the Supreme Court in 1954.⁶⁵⁵ The act exposed the underdeveloped state of evolution of the field of planning as well. Many of the submissions received in the first few years after its passage were inconsistent, revealing “a wide difference of understanding of what the contents of a general plan may be.”⁶⁵⁶

651 Scott, 341.

652 Ibid, 419.

653 Ibid, 419.

654 Ibid, 486.

655 Ibid, 491. *Berman v. Parker* affirmed that the District of Columbia’s Redevelopment Act of 1945 was indeed an appropriate exercise of police power rather than a taking, as the appellant had claimed. The act specifically cited the need for coordinated action to stem the spread and blight and marked a landmark affirmation of urban renewal, which in turn, accelerated the program just as it had begun to mature.

656 Carl Feiss as quoted in Scott, 493.

Downtown Inc.: From Slum Clearance to Downtown Redevelopment

The ineffectiveness of the initial authorization, coupled with the creeping blight in the post-war urban landscape, prompted President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953 to form an Advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs. Eisenhower, who had harbored reservations about the Housing Act as creeping socialism, sought to transform its basic character in part by shifting its guidance from progressive yet idealistic housing administrators towards savvy developers, whom the government needed to actually build after it had put up the funds for clearance. After taking office, Eisenhower formed a housing committee that included the mortgage banker and future shopping center developer James W. Rouse, well known for his participation in the Baltimore Plan on housing rehabilitation in the 1940s and early 1950s; and Miles Colean, who in his book *Renewing Our Cities*, popularized the term “urban renewal,” which replaced “slum clearance” as the watchword of redevelopment upon the passage of the Housing Act of 1954.⁶⁵⁷ The 1954 Housing Act expanded the scope of the program and set the stage for feasible action. Among the significant changes to the law, was its reference to “urban renewal areas,’ which could be slum areas requiring complete redevelopment, deteriorating areas to be restored by a program of voluntary repair and rehabilitation, or rundown areas in which a combination of demolition and rehabilitation would be appropriate.”⁶⁵⁸ Another important provision of the act, perhaps inspired by the financiers involved in its passage, was that it allowed for 10% of the urban renewal grant to be used for non-residential projects.

Between 1954 and 1965, that percentage would rise 25 percentage points, from 10 percent in 1954 to 20 percent in 1959 to 30 in 1961 and 35 in 1965.⁶⁵⁹ The increase in the percentage of urban renewal funds that could be used for purposes beyond housing reflected a critical shift in the program’s underpinnings, as cities increasingly used federal funds to clear blighted housing areas at the edge of central business districts and then replace those areas with large mixed-use redevelopment projects like convention centers or civic auditoriums meant to boost a city’s overall economic health.

Blight was often “in the eye of the beholder.”⁶⁶⁰ In order to stimulate private enterprise to participate in urban renewal, the requirements for deeming an area blighted loosened over time. Early renewal projects, which had often focused on the worst slums, had often cleared land only to find

657 Scott, 497-498.

658 Ibid, 502.

659 Frieden et al., *Downtown Inc.*, 24.

660 Ibid, 24.

no developer willing to actually build on it after demolition.⁶⁶¹ Clearance tended to displace residents who then moved to an adjacent neighborhood or area, spreading blight and overcrowding rather than alleviating it.⁶⁶² As a response to these early failures, later projects tended to focus on “tipping point” areas where demand for building was higher, but where residential buildings were often of sound or adequate condition.⁶⁶³ Downtown business interests and department store executives consolidated their interest into powerful growth coalitions, often patterned on the Allegheny Conference of the 1940s. In city after city, these coalitions boarded planes to Washington to lobby Congress for their major redevelopment projects at the edge of downtown, often directly accessible from a newly constructed or planned expressway 90% funded by the federal government.⁶⁶⁴ Of 439 projects approved between 1966 and 1968, 65 percent “were in or adjacent to central business districts.”⁶⁶⁵ According to Frieden and Sagalyn:

“Although Washington officials never conceded the dominance of downtown in urban renewal, the facts were clear to several experts who studied the program in the late 1950s and early 1960s...Capturing the highway and renewal programs put massive resources in the hands of the downtown coalitions...the downtown coalitions demonstrated three basic strategies that would contribute to the success of later projects. First was the unexpected power of a mayoral-business alliance. Second was a free-wheeling operating style that moved back and forth from the cities to Washington, combining astuteness and ingenuity with a willingness to bend whatever rules got in the way. The successful skimming of highway and renewal funds established a third enduring principle for rebuilt downtown: financing projects without asking for local tax dollars. Since most cities were trying to rebuild downtown because their revenue base was shrinking, current tax receipts left little to spare. Few mayors could even think about raising local tax rates for something as unconventional and untested as a plan to rebuild the center of the city.”⁶⁶⁶

The downtown-centric nature of the urban renewal projects undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in a proliferation of plans, which were required by and funded through the Housing Act. As William Slayton wrote in “Achievements of the Urban Renewal Program,” “the major product of the planning period is the *urban renewal plan*—the formal statement of the goals and objectives of the project, the treatment to be utilized, and the controls over new uses...It is also the basis upon

661 This is because the worst slums were often in areas that had no market for housing redevelopment, in spite of federal subsidies.

662 Scott, 523.

663 Frieden et al., 24.

664 Ibid, 25.

665 Ibid, Ibid.

666 Ibid, 26.

which the Federal Government provides financial assistance. The courts have found the urban renewal plan to be essential to carry out the public purpose of urban renewal.⁶⁶⁷ From the late 1950s on, renewal projects typically relied on one of two mechanisms to carry out a project—the Community Renewal Program (CRP) or the General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (GNRP).⁶⁶⁸ The CRP, introduced in 1959, was two-thirds funded by Title I grants and called for a long-range urban renewal program that was coordinated with other citywide efforts in order to encourage more comprehensive, integrated, and long-lasting initiatives. The GNRP was created in 1956 to facilitate the planning of unusually large redevelopment areas that would be renewed in multiple phases, such as large swaths of downtown or dilapidated neighborhoods.

In his essay, “Improving the Design Process In Urban Renewal” in *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, published by the MIT-Harvard Joint Center for Urban Studies in 1966, Roger Montgomery appraised the problem of planning in urban renewal in the following terms.

“In the beginning, city planners recommended that renewal take place only in a well orchestrated relation to ‘the master plan of the whole urban territory.’ Congress decided against such comprehensiveness in passing the Housing Act of 1949, which called for project plans only. The statutory requirement that each of these ‘indicate its relationship to definite local objectives’ operationally meant little in achieving comprehensive planning frameworks. Planners responded by making project plans into miniature city plans complete with land use and circulation maps, zoning ordinances, and the rest of the familiar apparatus of the comprehensive plan... When ‘wholeness’ is lost, only partial solutions are possible.”⁶⁶⁹

The piecemeal nature of urban renewal, what David Wallace had called “projectitis,”⁶⁷⁰ tended to undermine the efforts of comprehensive planning by encouraging the creation of cellular plans created by different planners and designers over the course of a decade. Central Business District Plans, Neighborhood Plans, Housing Plans, and Transportation Plans often conflicted or were carried out in a sequence that had the risk of undermining the work of its predecessor. In downtowns, the problem was compounded by plans produced by both public and private groups, as in the case of Baltimore, where the Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee was contracted by the housing authority to create a

667 Slayton in *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, 198.

668 *Ibid.*, 198.

669 Roger Montgomery. “Improving the Design Process in Urban Renewal” in *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*. ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964), 455-456.

670 Wallace, *Urban Planning My Way*.

plan that would have (in different political winds) been carried out by the city planning commission. Alternatively, CBD plans that were completed beyond the scope of an urban renewal grant had the potential to exercise a wider creative berth, as in the case of the privately funded Fort Worth plan, which was nevertheless adopted as the city's vision and impelled downtown stakeholders and city policymakers to action.

Perhaps most unusual about the urban renewal program in the late 1950s and early 1960s is that just as the program came under increasing scrutiny and endured criticism, first from Jane Jacobs and a host of activist reformers, and then by its own authors and former proponents, it expanded considerably. The reauthorization in 1961, the year that Jacobs' *Death and Life of American Cities* was published, increased urban renewal funding to 4 billion, with another 725 million authorized in 1964.⁶⁷¹ The peak year for project starts was not in the mid-1960s, as one might expect, but in 1972 under Nixon's HUD Secretary George Romney, two years before he effectively cancelled the urban renewal program and one year before he declared that the urban crisis had ended.⁶⁷² The confluence of an increasingly mature urban renewal order, highly motivated downtown business coalitions and city mayors, added to an increase in funding for urban renewal, made the mid-1960s both a moment of unprecedented expansion as well as a critical turning point.

I.M. Pei and the Central Business District Plan for Oklahoma City

The previous chapter of this thesis focused on the influence of Victor Gruen and his groundbreaking Fort Worth plan as a paradigm for American downtown renewal planning. While Gruen had been highly influential, and his plans were emulated by many in the late 1950s and early 1960s, his vision of turning the American city into a hybrid between a pedestrianized retail utopia and a permanent World's Fair represented just one of multiple visions for renewal. In this section, another vision is presented, that of the architect and planner Ieoh Ming (I.M.) Pei, whose plan for Oklahoma City's Central Business District presented a departure from the Gruen plan typology. Both Pei and Gruen Associates worked in the same cities in the 1960s and 1970s and one can thus compare and contrast their approaches. This chapter presents a detailed plan reading of Pei's 1964 plan for Oklahoma City and then discusses the contextual and temporal framework of that plan.

671 Slayton, *Urban Renewal*, 194.

672 Frieden et al., 53.

The Pei Plan: Factual Reading

I.M. Pei's 1964 plan, *A General Neighborhood Renewal Plan: Central Business District, Oklahoma City*, is unique among the plans explored as part of this investigation. The official plan, which covered the entirety of the city's central business district, eschewed the traditional structure of planning documents. Its findings were instead published in a brief technical report and accompanied by a series of auxiliary specification drawings drafted by the Fort Worth-based engineering firm Carter & Burgess, based on work by Pei and Barton-Aschman Associates. The plan's text has no narrative elements, diagrams, nor accompanying drawings. Instead, it includes only a series of matrices, structural conditions surveys, and cost estimates to support its implementation. The accompanying plan layers, included as a series of fold-out maps embedded in the document, read more like technical specifications for a giant floor plate building than a plan for a city. It mapped utilities typically lacking in large plans for central business districts, even including a telephone distribution map, a plat map, and a street lighting plan.⁶⁷³

The main illustrative site plan for Oklahoma City, in spite of the sparseness of the plan elsewhere, possessed an incredible amount of detail. Of the structures surveyed by Pei's team, only 15 percent were found to be in sound condition, with the remaining 85 percent (1,135 structures out of 1,336) deemed sub-standard.⁶⁷⁴ The entire site area for the project consisted of 528 acres of the Central Business District,⁶⁷⁵ which was made up of 11 city blocks on each side. Of the roughly 120 blocks in the CBD, only a select few, including the civic center area, were preserved. The plan called for the removal of 30 street blocks from the site area as part of superblock conversions. In place of these assets, Pei set forth a total scheme for the renewal of the downtown, as ambitious as Gruen's Fort Worth plan, yet prepared with highly detailed phasing plans, technical maps, and political support to back it up.

Pei's plan for the Oklahoma City CBD was broken into four

⁶⁷³ Among the map layers included in the plan are the following: Illustrative Site Plan; General Location/Schematic Land Use Plan; Detailed Land Use Plan; Zoning Plan; Community Facilities Plan; Clearance and Redevelopment Plan; Structural Conditions; Water Distribution Plan; Gas Distribution Plan; Storm Drainage Plan; Fire Alarm and Traffic Signal Plan; Telephone Distribution Plan; Streets & Parking Plan; Right-of-Way Adjustment Plan; Vicinity Map; Topographic Map; Property Map; Plat Map; Electrical Distribution Plan; Street Lighting Plan; Sanitary Sewer Plan; Land Use Map (Existing); Zoning Map (Existing); Population Density; Community Facilities Map (Existing); Structural Conditions Map; Soil Data Map; Highways and Streets- Existing; Community Facilities Map (Vicinity); Aerial Photograph (CBD); and Aerial Photograph (Vicinity).

⁶⁷⁴ I.M. Pei & Associates. *A General Neighborhood Renewal Plan: Central Business District - Oklahoma City*. (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority, 1964), GN-201D-1.

⁶⁷⁵ This was based on a precedent set when Wallace had the entire Baltimore CBD declared an urban renewal area in the 1950s.



5.4
(above)
 "The Galleria." The Central Business District Plan for Oklahoma City. I.M. Pei and Associates, 1964. Credit: Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority

5.5
(below)
 "The Tivoli Gardens." The Central Business District Plan for Oklahoma City. I.M. Pei and Associates, 1964. Credit: Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority





5.6

I.M. Pei with Site Model, 10' x 12'.
The Central Business District Plan
for Oklahoma City. I.M. Pei and
Associates, 1964.

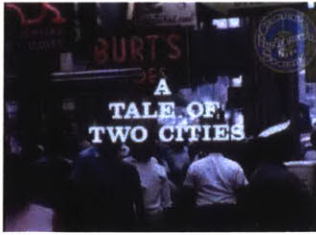
Credit: Oklahoma Historical Society

minute details for buildings that would not come into existence for several years, if at all, including a Holiday Inn, an Oklahoma City Travel Lodge, a Y.W.C.A, and several planned office towers. The southern edge of the site would be lined with structured parking to permit direct access into downtown, an adaptation of the familiar “intercept” strategy.

While the Pei Plan itself was merely a collection of engineering specifications at the scale of an entire central business district, Pei’s firm built a 10-by-12-foot scale model of the proposal to bring its plan to life. They also commissioned a series of illustrative color perspectives for the key elements of the scheme to be delineated by Robert E. Schwartz, a New York based architect of the firm Kempa and Schwartz who was responsible for many of Pei’s renderings in the 1960s.⁶⁷⁷⁶⁷⁸ The renderings for the Pei Plan try to convey a sense of playfulness completely absent in the model and the plan document itself. An eye-level view of the Tivoli Gardens, for instance, shows a verdant landscape shaded in the foreground, intersected by an open car monorail crossing a lagoon teeming with visitors. The interior perspective of the Galleria uses many of tropes familiar in Gruen’s work, including children holding balloons, a structured parking garage leading to an elevated interior balcony overlooking a plaza, and a rib-vaulted concrete ceiling casting light onto an interior courtyard. In spite of the vast clearance proposed in the scheme, Schwartz’s renderings

677 This included renderings for Pei’s Christian Science Center in Boston, Massachusetts.

678 Schwartz’s renderings are featured in Albert O. Halse, *Architectural Rendering*. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, New York, 1972), 305-307.



5.7

"A Tale of Two Cities." Film produced by the Urban Action Foundation, Inc. 1965, 16mm. Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society

nevertheless highlighted some of the city's historic towers, including the Sheraton and Biltmore Hotels, the Ramsey Tower and the First National Bank Building, all from the early 1930s, amid a modern skyline of new high rises.

While many plans developed basic physical models to show the massing of their central business district plans, the model for the Pei Plan possessed a level of architectural detail far greater than normal. As the plan's primary undertaking and main advertising strategy, the model sought to convey what a graphically rich planning brochure, such as the one Pei produced for Erievue, would have otherwise portrayed. For some Oklahoma City property owners, the specificity and scope of the model immediately produced opposition, spurring contention over which buildings would be preserved and which would be cleared. The owner of the John A. Brown department store downtown, for instance, was dissatisfied with the assigned location of her expanded store, and threatened a move to the suburbs if her demands were not met.⁶⁷⁹ The unveiling of the model also influenced retailers' decisions about whether or not to renew their leases and property owners' considerations about whether or not to improve their buildings, as urban renewal plans did elsewhere in the country as well.⁶⁸⁰

To promote the plan, the Urban Action Foundation, Inc., Oklahoma City's coalition of downtown business interests, produced a film that highlighted the virtues of Pei's dream city. Set to the tune of Petula Clark's 1965 song "Downtown,"⁶⁸¹ the film begins with scenes of present day blight in Oklahoma City. The narrator explains, "These are scenes of a disease called blight, which like a deadly mold has settled on our downtown and is killing it. The symptoms are obsolete structures, congested traffic, too little parking, worn out houses and low-grade businesses. Since fewer people come here anymore and business costs are up, many merchants have thrown up their hands in disgust and moved out."⁶⁸² The images of blight and decay used in the film echoed those often included in plan documents decrying the deteriorated conditions of the American postwar city—variegated storefronts and cacophonous signage; mixed races shopping on crumbling main streets; curbside parking and traffic congestion.

Using a "periscopic camera trick," the film takes its audience ten years into Oklahoma City's future into "a dream that will soon move

679 Steve Lackmeyer and Jack Money. *OKC Second Time Around*. (Oklahoma City, OK: Full Circle Press, Oklahoma City, 2006), 20.

680 Lackmeyer et al., 21.

681 *A Tale of Two Cities*. Film sponsored by the Urban Action Foundation, Inc., 1965. 16 mm. Courtesy of the Oklahoma City Historical Society.

682 *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Ibid*.

from the drawing boards and planning sessions as the second great era of Oklahoma City.”⁶⁸³ In a series of one-point perspectives that give the impression of driving an automobile through downtown, the audience is taken from the convention center, to the multi-level parking garages to the federal plaza and the Tivoli Gardens, a “central core of fun and excitement.” Highlighted in the film were the “4000 families that would live in apartments within an open space environment,” and shopping areas that would emulate the “boundless markets of the world.”

The Pei Plan for Oklahoma City departed from the conventional central business district plan in significant ways. The plan document itself lacked a comprehensive design and instead took the form of a report to be presented to the Urban Renewal Administration under the General Neighborhood Renewal Plan Program. Its primary method of visual representation, using a detailed model with an meticulous site plan, presented advantages in terms of implementability and practicality, but also left Pei and his team open to intense scrutiny of the specifics of their proposal, something that could be obscured in colorful planning documents.

In his discussion of plan design in the Joint Center’s 1965 compendium, *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, Roger Montgomery pinpointed two types of plans—open plans and tight plans. An “open plan,” wrote Montgomery, “put an emphasis on process. Its land use controls did not locate uses on a map...Spatial arrangement of the required high-density housing, public park, parking, and landscaped areas, and the inclusion and arrangement of the permitted theater, office, and commercial space were left to the redeveloper and his site planners.”⁶⁸⁴ A tight plan, for which Montgomery used Pei’s Erievue plan as an example, is “based on an elaborate, highly refined overall design for the project area” and “seek[s] comprehensive regulation of the renewal processes.”⁶⁸⁵ Pei’s plan for Oklahoma City was a tight plan. It treated the entire urban redevelopment process as it would a building, detailing the utilities, phases of redevelopment, and necessary configurations of the allotted programs.⁶⁸⁶

The Pei Plan: Contextual Reading

Oklahoma City’s urban renewal era started late. Though Harland Bartholomew had produced a comprehensive plan for the city in the 1940s (1944-1948), by the time his work was published and adopted, many of

683 *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Ibid.*

684 Montgomery, 476-77.

685 *Ibid.*, 472.

686 See Montgomery diagrams, 473.

its recommendations were already out of date.⁶⁸⁷ Despite the passage of the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954, the city struggled to convince the state legislature to authorize legislation enabling it until 1959, ten years after the first act had passed.⁶⁸⁸ The law raised constitutional questions that troubled property rights activists, turning urban renewal into the keystone issue of the city's 1959 mayoral election. When the city finally established an Urban Renewal Authority in 1961, it had a lot of cities to look to for advice. Following a pattern that was by then familiar in many American cities, downtown businessmen formed the Urban Action Foundation in 1961 and traveled to Norfolk and Pittsburgh to see urban renewal progress underway.⁶⁸⁹ Inspired by their peers, the Urban Action Foundation hired the Renewal Authority's first director, James Yielding and then recruited the architect-planner I.M. Pei to produce a plan. Urban Action had been impressed by Pei's 1961 Erieview plan for a blighted section of downtown Cleveland.⁶⁹⁰ That plan, which resulted in the successful clearance of 163 acres of blighted properties for a civic center, housing, and offices, was viewed by the coalition as a fitting model for Oklahoma City's modernization.

In the story of urban renewal, Pei's career had run a course parallel to Victor Gruen's, yet, by the mid-1960s, had produced much different outcomes. I.M. Pei had studied architecture at MIT and then Harvard in the 1940s, when both Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer were active leaders in the school. After briefly teaching at Harvard, Pei accepted a position with the real estate firm Webb & Knapp, where he worked as an in-house architect under the developer William Zeckendorf on planning and development projects around the United States. His first commission at the firm (which was unbuilt) was an apartment tower in Atlanta to be financed under the Housing Act of 1949. In the early 1950s, Pei, working with Zeckendorf, designed a shopping center on a decommissioned airfield on Long Island—the Roosevelt Field Shopping Center, which opened in 1955 and was among the first regional shopping centers in the United States. Shortly after that commission, in 1955 Pei established independence from Zeckendorf and thereafter went on to obtain some of the most high-profile commissions for urban renewal projects just as the program was gaining momentum. Pei's work beginning in the late 1950s (some of which had begun under Zeckendorf) included the Mile High Center in Denver (1952-1956); the Southwest Washington DC Redevelopment Plan (1953-

687 This included Bartholomew's disavowal's of public housing one year before the Housing Act of 1949 and mentioned in Chapter 1.

688 Lackmeyer et al., 7.

689 *Ibid.*, 11-12.

690 *Ibid.*, 13.

1968); Society Hill/Washington Square East Renewal Plan (1957-1964), on which he collaborated with Edmund Bacon in Philadelphia; Kips Bay Plaza in New York (1957-1962); and the Government Center Plan for Boston (1960-61).

In contrast to Victor Gruen Associates, Welton Beckett, or Charles Luckman, Pei's architecture adopted the dour modernist vocabulary of Mies Van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. Rather than orient commissions around retail complexes or echo the cellular urban hierarchies of European cities, Pei's plans tended to call for near total clearance and an assemblage of immense alternating vertical and horizontal blocks set apart by expansive civic plazas and park-like settings.

The Pei plan for Oklahoma City was no different in this respect. It reflected many of the same design strategies he used elsewhere, including slim residential tower complexes offset by two-to-three story townhouses set amidst immense civic spaces studded by flag poles and office towers. The plan differs from Pei's other works because it was the only time that we would be commissioned to draft a central business district plan rather than a core sub-area plan or government center. In a 1977 interview with the *Washington Post*, Pei was cited as leading a "counterattack against the spread of downtown shopping centers ringed with vast parking areas."⁶⁹¹ "A shopping center is the antithesis of a healthy downtown," said Pei. "If you've solved a downtown's parking problems, you've killed downtown."⁶⁹² Pei's plan for Oklahoma City, while it did provide for parking along the perimeter of downtown, rejected many of the conventional strategies in use by planners at the time and is unique for its relative de-emphasis of downtown retail.⁶⁹³ Rather than encircle the entire Central Business District with a ring road, Pei incorporated at-grade access roads. The retail center at the heart of Oklahoma City, though a significant element in the scheme, represented one of multiple vignettes and arguably was less prominent than Pei's idea for the "Tivoli Gardens."

The Pei Plan: Temporal Reading

After Pei's team left Oklahoma City in 1965, the Urban Action Foundation and the city's renewal authority undertook the process of getting the plan adopted, which they accomplished in 1966. By that time, many downtown businesses and retailers, whose properties had been marked for clearance,

691 Lee Mitgang. "I.M. Pei: Changing City Faces." *The Washington Post*, April 30, 1977.

692 "Changing City Faces," *Ibid*.

693 Frances X. Clines. "New York Planner Wraps Up Oklahoma City Dream Package." *New York Times*, February 7, 1965. Pei's plan for Oklahoma City had been spearheaded by a city planner and a senior associate of his team, August Nakagawa, who had previously worked for the Chicago Plan Commission and had been a city planning student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design at the same time as Pei.

were left in a suspended state. Some opted not to renew their leases, others stayed, but amid an uncertain future.⁶⁹⁴ Wide scale demolition in downtown began in 1967 as part of the first phase of Pei's Plan, Project 1-A, which would include the new Mummers Theater,⁶⁹⁵ two major office towers, the Tivoli Gardens,⁶⁹⁶ a new Convention Center, and new parking garages.⁶⁹⁷

In the late 1960s, however, while much of Project 1-A underwent construction, the circumstances of urban renewal began to gradually shift. James White, who became the urban renewal authority director in 1967, recognized the peril of clearing land without having a developer secured, something that had plagued Erieview and countless other projects in the early 1960s. Upon taking on the directorship, White "promised not to clear any property without first having a developer committed to building on the same site."⁶⁹⁸ In 1969, in a decisive policy shift by the Nixon Administration, HUD stopped automatically approving applications for supplemental funds. As Project 1-A moved towards completion and city leaders poised themselves for phase two of the plan, federal money began to dry up.⁶⁹⁹

Pei's Galleria, an enclosed shopping mall with concrete rib-vaulted ceilings, required \$32 million in federal assistance to purchase and clear its four-block area. But the market for downtown retail lagged. Two regional shopping centers had opened at the city's outskirts, Penn Square Mall in 1958 and Shepherd Mall in 1964, the same year the plan was released. In 1974, a third regional mall, the Crossroads Mall, opened and the John A. Brown Department Store left downtown with it. The development rights for the Galleria had by then transferred to the Dayton-Hudson Company, who saw bleak prospects for the mall's realization.⁷⁰⁰ When Pei returned to Oklahoma City to review progress on the plan in 1976, he was pleased with much of what he saw, but was frustrated by the lack of progress in residential construction, as well as the incomplete state of the "Myriad" Gardens (since renamed from the Tivoli Gardens) and the Galleria.⁷⁰¹ At his urging, Pei convinced a friend, the Dallas-based developer Vincent Carroza, to undertake the Galleria project.⁷⁰²

694 Lackmeyer et al., 21.

695 The Mummers Theater would be designed in a far more abstract style than Pei had originally intended. The architect John Johansen, who had also designed the Morris A. Mechanic Theater at Charles Center, designed the theater, which was demolished amid protests in 2014.

696 A delegation from the city, including then Mayor, visited the actual Tivoli Gardens on a junket in 1967 to garner support for the project. The project was later renamed the Myriad Gardens.

697 Lackmeyer et al., 30.

698 Ibid, 32.

699 Ibid, 38.

700 Ibid, 41.

701 Ibid, 46-47.

702 Ibid, 47.

In 1975, eleven years after the Pei Plan, the city undertook a second planning process, with Gruen Associates, to craft a more expansive vision of downtown's future that would include links to a nearby medical campus, riverfront development, and a new capitol complex to the north.⁷⁰³ Gruen Associates had, by 1975, lost much of the talent and energy that had defined the firm in the late 1950s and 1960s, and no longer produced the same volume of plans or projects as they had during the urban renewal era.⁷⁰⁴ While some of the firm's key actors, including the illustrator Ben Althen and graphic designer Marion Sampler, were involved in the Central City Plan, the plan brochure demonstrates a significant decline in the overall quality and imaginativeness of the work. Gruen himself had left the United States in 1968 and would pass away in 1980.

In spite of this, the Gruen *Central City Plan* of 1975 provides a good example of the enlarged scope of "central city" planning by the mid-1970s and follows a pattern discussed earlier in the Lawrence Halprin *CBD Sector Report* for Fort Worth of 1971.⁷⁰⁵ While the plan lacks a strong and coherent graphic composition and includes renderings of inconsistent character, size, and color by multiple hands, it has a comprehensiveness that goes well beyond that of most central business district plans. The various facets of the plan are articulated in extensive site plans for areas beyond the central business district, including a proposal for a riverfront marina in a man-made dammed "lake;" a plan for a medical center campus; and the redevelopment of several areas at the industrial fringe of downtown adjacent to the railroads and the river. Ben Althen again provided renderings of the plan's key elements, which built upon the style and graphic character of those done by Robert Schwartz a decade earlier. The Pei Plan formed the basis of this work and was seen as the backbone for its further elaboration.

In spite of the recent struggles to implement 1964 Plan, *Central City* offered an optimistic prognosis for the Galleria and other key projects.⁷⁰⁶ Aerial views of the downtown build upon Pei's vision of downtown residential and included his lush botanical gardens ringed by parking structures. In spite of its enhancements and continuity, the plan also acknowledged the implications of the recent shift of urban renewal

703 The project was funded as the "Central Business District Expanded General Neighborhood Renewal Plan" and seems to have garnered funding from the original source as the Pei Plan.

704 Oklahoma City commissioned Gruen Associates, Alan M. Voorhees & Associates, Larry Smith & Company, Grossman & Keith Engineering, and McCaleb Engineering to draw up the plan in 1972.

The perception of general decline at Gruen in the mid-1970s is based on conversations with Crawford Westbrook and observations of the firm's overall work trajectory.

705 Gruen Associates. *Central City Plan, Oklahoma City*. (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority, 1975).

706 Ibid, 21.

5.8

View of the Myriad Gardens and Downtown. *Central City Plan, Oklahom City*. Gruen Associates, 1975. Courtesy of MIT Libraries.



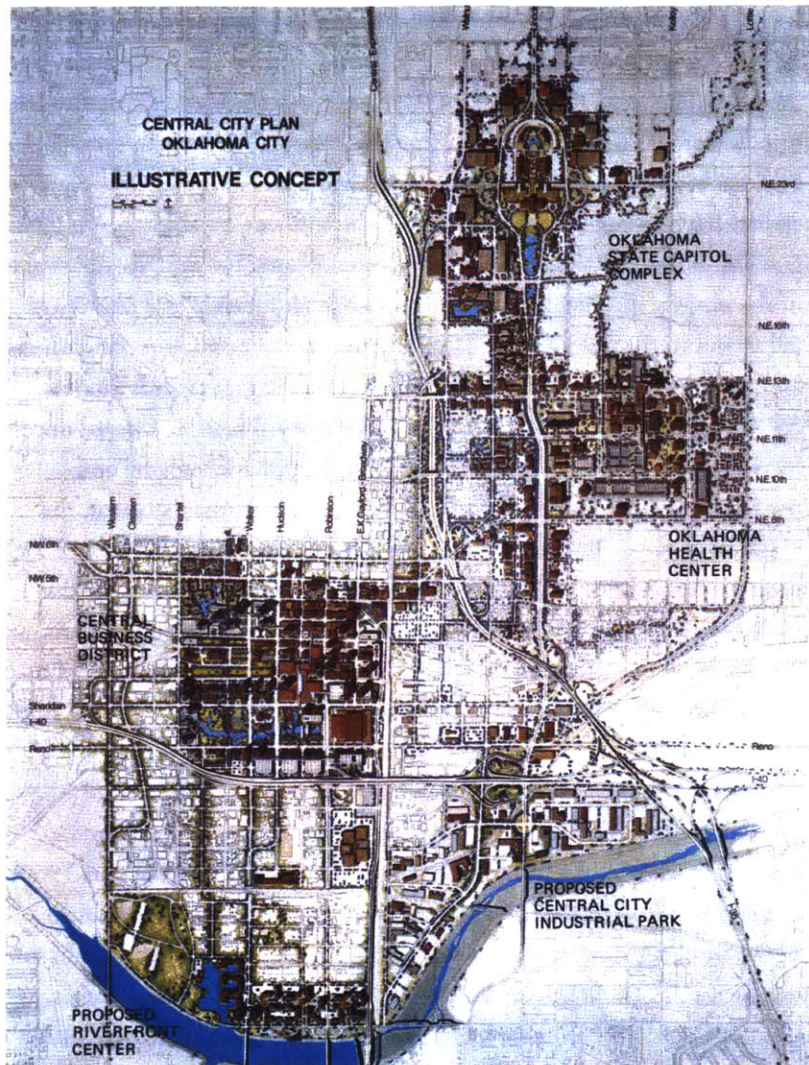
funding towards Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).⁷⁰⁷ Block Grants, while a substantial source of funding for local projects, could not compare to the massive earmarks outlaid for specific projects during the urban renewal era through congressional lobbying. In 1975, Oklahoma City was entitled to a grant of \$6.2 million per year from HUD through CDBG, roughly one-tenth of its original urban renewal grant in 1966.⁷⁰⁸

By the mid-1970s, the public no longer had the stomach for urban renewal projects at the scale of the Pei Plan. Public opinion had shifted against the renewal authorities and increasingly embraced historic preservation and rehabilitation efforts led by the private sector as an alternative. In the late 1970s, one city councilor called for the creation of an “old town” district downtown, of which a few examples, including Denver’s Larimer Square and Boston’s recently opened Faneuil Hall Marketplace, had by then garnered attention. Ultimately, support for the Pei Plan fizzled. Though a number of key projects in downtown Oklahoma City eventually came to fruition, including the construction of the Myriad Gardens (the Crystal Bridge Botanical Gardens opened in 1980) multiple downtown office buildings and hotels, the convention center, and a small underground “Metro” concourse system, as many of the key features of the plan, including the Galleria, were never built. Instead, development momentum shifted towards the former light industrial areas at the edge of downtown, where structures that had not been cleared as part of urban renewal formed the nexus of a new historic preservation district named Bricktown.⁷⁰⁹

707 *Central City Plan*, 122.

708 *Ibid*, 2, 122.

709 Lackmeyer et al., 85.



5.9
 Illustrative Site Plan. *Central City Plan, Oklahoma City*. Gruen Associates, 1975. Courtesy of MIT Libraries.

The plan for Oklahoma City's Central Business District provides an important subject of comparison in the downtown narrative. Pei rivaled Gruen in his influence in urban renewal era planning and advanced an alternative paradigm of modernism and redevelopment. His work eschewed main street pedestrian retail in favor of regularized, concrete superblock housing, botanical gardens, cultural centers, and grand civic complexes. If Gruen's strategy could be described as cellular, Pei's was more dispersed, creating a multi-pronged center in which housing, retail, and parks had equal weight. Pei's urban renewal lacked or at least contained (as in his *Myriad Gardens*) the kitsch and festivity evident in Gruen's plans. The narrative of the Oklahoma City plan is an important one, in part because it was for Pei an aberration, an application of ideas that he had used in his urban renewal area plans applied to the scale of the central business district.

The plan also demonstrated new techniques in advertising major downtown projects, including its primary use of a highly detailed scale model and periscopic camera tour to entice city leaders and citizens to buy into downtown revitalization, shifting focus away from the plan brochure. Had Pei begun planning work for the Oklahoma City project five years earlier, the plan might have proved to be an influential prototype for CBD renewal in the 1960s, as his Erieview proposal arguably was. Yet the timing of the project, in spite of its proactive business leadership and creativity, fell victim to the changing course of urban renewal politics, racial tensions, and the rise of the preservation movement. Pei's Plan, as a proscriptive, tight plan crafted under the auspices of the renewal regime, faltered once its main funding sources ran out. His lack of emphasis on retail and the relative lack of influence of the downtown department stores in the planning process, hindered the development of what might have been the project's cornerstone. That the Pei Plan elected to move ahead with the Convention Center and the Myriad Gardens, rather than with Galleria, at the outset, also suggests that the plan's relative lack of interest in retail may have ultimately undermined its overall impact.

Malls and Megastructures: The Fun Palace Comes Downtown

Oklahoma City's development trajectory reflected not only a different typology of development in the central business district by the mid-1960s, but also a shift in its scale. As Frieden and Sagalyn have pointed out in *Downtown Inc.*, downtown renewal projects grew bigger and bigger in scale during the 1960s. Whereas Rockefeller Center had been only 12 acres, Charles Center in Baltimore was 33 acres, Government Center in Boston 44 acres, and the Gateway Center in Minneapolis 72 acres. Large general neighborhood renewal areas like Erieview, Oklahoma City, and Southwest Washington D.C. were even larger, at 163 acres, 528 acres, and 560 acres respectively.⁷¹⁰

In 1976, Detroit architect Louis G. Redstone published a book called *The New Downtowns*, in which he presented a series of case studies showing exemplary downtown projects completed over the past decade. The former Detroit City Planning Director Charles A. Blessing, who had led that city's renewal efforts from 1953 to 1977, authored the foreword to Redstone's compendium.

"If there were no perspective on this threat beyond the experience of the cities of the United States, one might give way to acceptance of the inevitable demise of the central core city and its functions. However, examination of what is happening in

710 Frieden et al., *Downtown Inc.*, 27.

cities throughout the world suggests that it is precisely this continued vitality, even exuberance, of the heart of the city in countless great cities of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, which raises the insistent question: *why* here in America...*why* should our CBDs fade away when in most of the rest of the world the central city becomes ever more dominant, more exciting, and in many respects more beautiful and humane?"⁷¹¹

Blessing qualified his frustration with the seemingly inexplicable circumstances of the American CBD with one hypothesis. "The answer to this exodus—to the draining of vitality from the core of the central city and the fragmentation occasioned by the fantastic fact of the construction of 10,000 regional shopping centers in the United States alone in the years since the construction of the first regional center, Northland, in 1953—is central to the very continued existence of the central city itself and to the idea of the role of the city throughout its long history as the seat of civilization, the center of commerce, and culture and human services of all kinds."⁷¹²

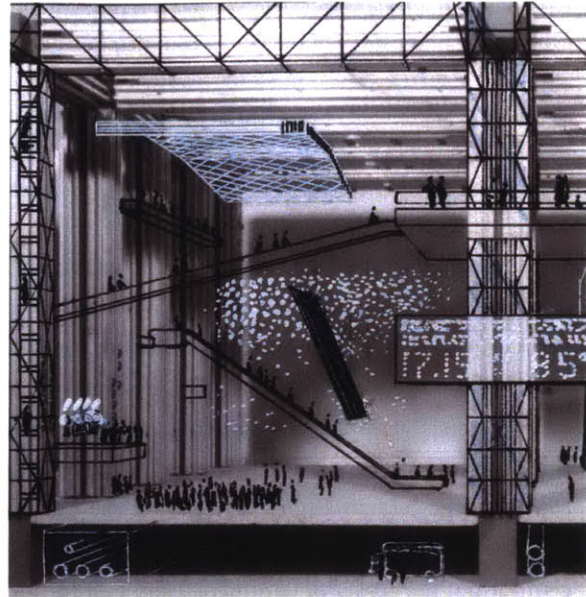
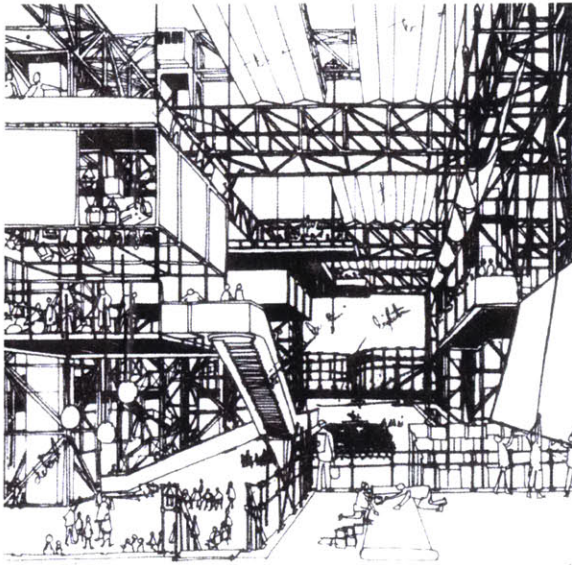
In spite of the continued decline of the central city, Redstone's documentation of the progress made by the mid-1970s provides a thorough account of the ambitious and large scale redevelopment projects that urban renewal and private enterprise had made possible. The scale and ambition of these efforts conveyed a continued confidence in the rebirth of the city even at a moment of unabated decentralization. His survey included not only projects and plans for pedestrian malls or enclosed shopping concourses downtown, but also entire networks of elevated walkways that had been constructed in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and elsewhere; enormous public artworks crouching before looming downtown modern skyscrapers; people-mover systems; and mixed-use complexes like Constitution Plaza in Hartford and Water Tower Place in Chicago. These projects belonged less to the age of Corbusian modernism that had produced Pittsburgh's Gateway Center than to the age of Megastructure, described by the Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki as "a large frame in which all the functions of a city or part of a city are housed" and by Ralph Wilcoxon as "a structural framework into which smaller structural units...can be built—or even 'plugged-in' or 'clipped-on' after having been prefabricated elsewhere."⁷¹³

As an adaptation of the architectural language of megastructure to the forces of capital, these urban redevelopment projects, foreshadowed by

711 Louis G. Redstone. *The New Downowns: Rebuilding Business Districts*. (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1976), xii.

712 Redstone, xii-xiii.

713 Reyner Banham. *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past*. (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976), 8.



5.10, 5.11
 “The Fun Palace.” Cedric Price,
 1961. Credit: The Canadian Centre
 for Architecture

Rochester’s Midtown Plaza and the Back Bay Center, approached a scale and character hitherto unimaginable. Their constituent elements extruded and multiplied the architectural footnotes of earlier eras, forging schemes that rivaled Gruen’s Fort Worth plan in their totality. The basic elements of the megastructural urban complex had been seen before, in the sections of Bacon’s Center City Philadelphia Plan, in Louis Kahn’s parking edifices, and at Charles Center, where the city within a city was drawn as a unified complex, with its entire program iterated by floor by floor. Philadelphia’s plan for the Gallery at Market Street East,⁷¹⁴ for instance, drew upon the emerging architectural ideas embedded in Cedric Price’s 1962 Fun Palace Project,⁷¹⁵ and to a lesser extent, upon Yona Friedman’s tensile structures proposed for his *urbanisme mobile*.⁷¹⁶ Its central enclosed mall, shown in a perspectival section frequently used in that era, featured a three-story mall broken into a panoply of escalators, elevated walkways, and immense signs draped from the ceiling whose total effect echoed the “adaptable,” “mobility-on-demand” environment of Price’s *palais ludique*.⁷¹⁷ Running along the bottom of the open concourse were subway trains, whose presence had been all but ignored in the previous era of plans. Likewise, in plans drawn up for Baltimore’s Harborplace in the 1960s, echoes of the British collective Archigram’s 1964 Plug-in City and the Japanese Metabolist’s Ocean City and Tokyo Bay proposals are discernable.

The shift in the 1960s from the amoebic pedestrian mall cities

714 Redstone, 163.

715 Banham, *Megastructure*, 86-87.

716 *Ibid.*, 60-62.

717 Redstone, 163-176. The Gallery at Market East was eventually developed by James Rouse and opened in 1977.



5.12
Model, Market Street East,
Philadelphia, 1975.
Architects: Brower & Fradley
Credit: *The New Downtowns*, Louis
G. Redstone, 1976.

of Gruen and the discreet superblocks of I.M. Pei towards the multi-level concourse, megastructure malls marked a decisive, if largely formal, transition in the mid-to-late-1960s. The application of the megastructural idea to the downtown pedestrian mall is illustrated by WMRT's Regional Plan for Buffalo.⁷¹⁸ The plan, published in 1971 and one of the first to comprehensively integrate a subway system into its scheme, adapted the basic formula of Fort Worth to a scale and architecture of "interlocking" parts—a downtown whose parking garages, skyscrapers, subways, convention facilities, and retail malls would form a singular, interconnected system offering an experience beyond what suburban centers could ever seek to offer.

The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York by Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd

Among the projects featured in Redstone's 1976 compendium was a proposal for downtown Buffalo by the firm Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (WMRT) completed in 1971. David Wallace had been one of the principal authors of Philadelphia's seminal Report on the Central Urban Renewal Area (CURA) in 1956 and then went on to spearhead the Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee's work on Charles Center in the late 1950s and the Inner Harbor in the 1960s. While a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Wallace had teamed with the landscape architect and fellow University of Pennsylvania professor Ian McHarg to establish a practice in 1962, after being recruited to create a

718 Redstone, 277.

regional plan for the Greenspring and Worthington Valleys in Baltimore County. *The Plan for the Valleys* (1964) cemented the team's reputation and, after being joined by partners John Roberts, a landscape architect, and Thomas Todd, an urban designer, won the firm many high profile commissions from the mid-1960s through the 1970s.

The WMRT plan for Buffalo, like Pei's Plan for Oklahoma City, represented only one of many undertakings in the firm's portfolio and in the career of David Wallace, who led its production with Thomas Todd. The plan is thematically representative of the final phase of downtown plans in the urban renewal era. Published in 1971, the WMRT plan for Buffalo, culls together many of the threads that have been mentioned throughout this investigation—from pedestrianization and retail revitalization to urban renewal and megastructure. At the same time, the plan features emerging threads in the planning apparatus, including the mass transit planning and waterfront development, which would become key themes in the planning programs of the 1970s onward.⁷¹⁹

The Regional Center: Factual Reading

WMRT's *The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York* marked both a crystallization of the urban renewal order, as well as a foreshadowing of its changing mores. The plan begins by stating the city's seven primary goals:

- 1) To increase the number and variety of jobs available Downtown;
- 2) To increase residential opportunities close to jobs and social activities;
- 3) To increase city tax revenue;
- 4) to maintain Downtown's role as the administrative center of the region;
- 5) To raise the level and increase the scope of Downtown services for the Buffalo metropolitan area;
- 6) To attract as diversified a mix of mutually supporting activities, businesses, and people as possible;
- 7) To seek out and promote programs and projects in the City and Region that are compatible with Downtown goals.⁷²⁰

As compared to earlier plans, the plan for Buffalo set forth what on its face appeared to be diverse strategy for combatting the challenges of downtown. The plan's language, which focused on creating jobs and achieving a diversity of activities and "people," in itself marked a departure of the rhetoric of earlier CBD plans. It proposed three key ingredients "to

⁷¹⁹ Interestingly, the plan lacks an emphasis on the environmental planning for which the firm first gained renown in their *Plan for the Valleys* (1964).

⁷²⁰ Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (WMRT). *The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York*. (Buffalo, NY: City of Buffalo, April 1971), 1.

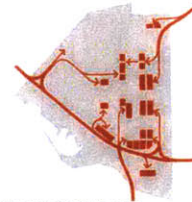
trigger this new growth” and support “anticipated population increases in the region.”⁷²¹ a high-speed transit line, an “all-weather, air-conditioned mall on Main Street,” and “increases in the parking supply to keep pace with new growth resulting in 20,000 new parking spaces.”⁷²² These three principal “ingredients” are reinforced and iterated using a series of six diagrams abstracting the recipe of downtown renewal. The first three diagrams show a triangular confluence of expressways with arrows leading into downtown. Traffic would be “siphoned” into parking structures, which would in turn, feed into the mall. The second three diagrams show a cruciform mass transit system with bubbles around each station to denote its yield area. At each station would be a concentration of major uses. The mall would stitch the entire complex together, using a multi-level pedestrian movement system similar to those then under development in other cold-weather cities like Minneapolis, Toronto, and Montreal.⁷²³

The WMRT plan for Buffalo focused on downtown as a solution to the regional imbalance then emerging. “In terms of retail growth an increased capture of 33% of regional sales (shopping goods only) is not an unreasonable expectation if Downtown produces an environment competitive with suburban shopping malls,” it read. “Its variety and many other qualities and advantages cannot be duplicated in suburban shopping malls, whereas Downtown can duplicate the facilities found in suburban malls.”⁷²⁴ Despite its late publication, the plan repeated the basic recipe that CBD plans had been advocating for over a decade: a new convention center; downtown hotels and housing; expanded downtown office space; an enclosed pedestrian shopping street, multi-level structured parking; and circumferential highways. Only in its focus on transit, as well as its inclusion of a large waterfront housing complex already underway, designed by the architect Paul Rudolph, did the plan support a novel program for growth.

Consistent with the firm’s work in the *Plan for the Valleys* (1964), *The Baltimore Inner Harbor Master Plan* (1964), and the central business district plans for Los Angeles, New Orleans, Miami, and elsewhere, the principal content for the Buffalo plan was presented at two scales—an illustrative site plan focusing on the main pedestrian spine and a downtown framework—augmented by a series of thematic plan layers, illustrative sections, and axonometric diagrams. In keeping with the plan’s growth-oriented ideology, WMRT reconceived of the downtown as a cluster of newly built office towers, building off of recent downtown projects in



Expressways Serve Downtown



Expressways Feed into Parking Structures



Parking Structures Feed into the Mall



Mass Transit Serves Downtown



Mass Transit Serves the Mall and Major Uses



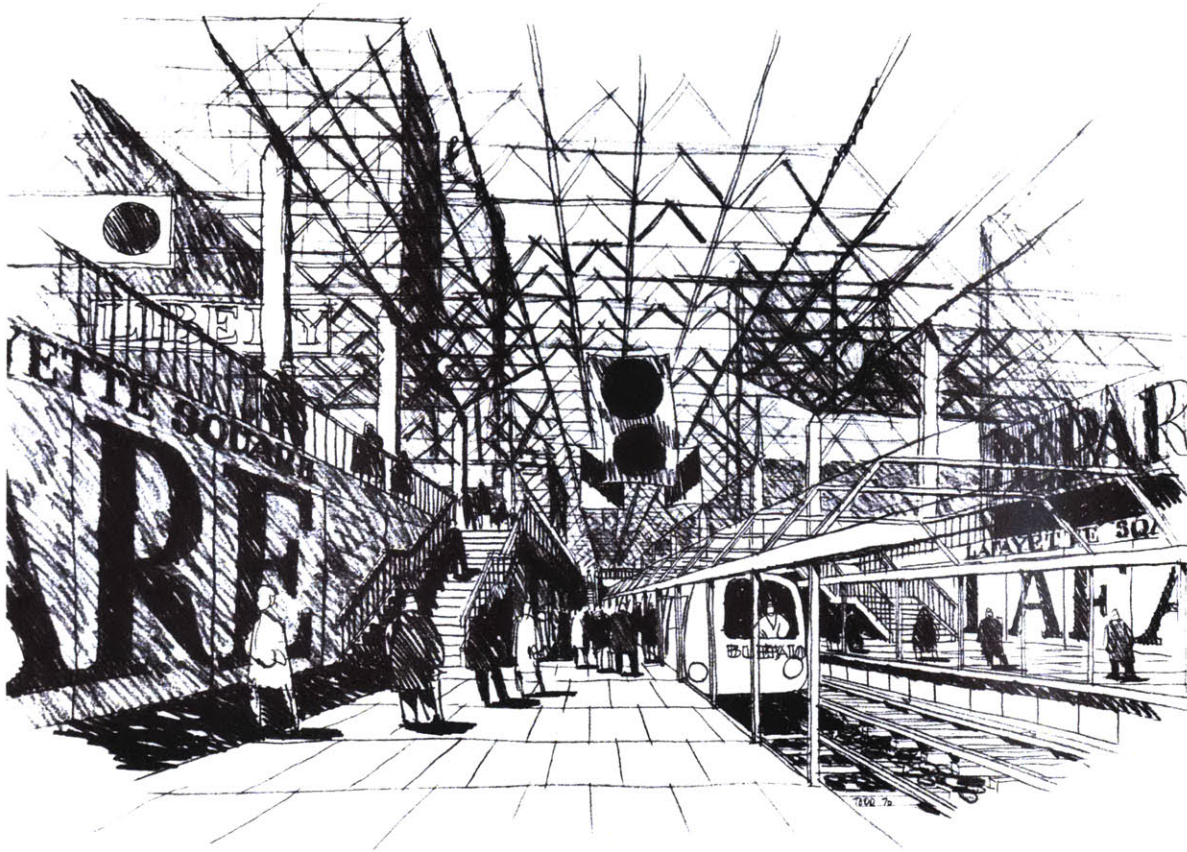
The Mall Connects New Private Development

721 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 2.

722 Ibid, Ibid.

723 Ibid, 9.

724 Ibid, 2.

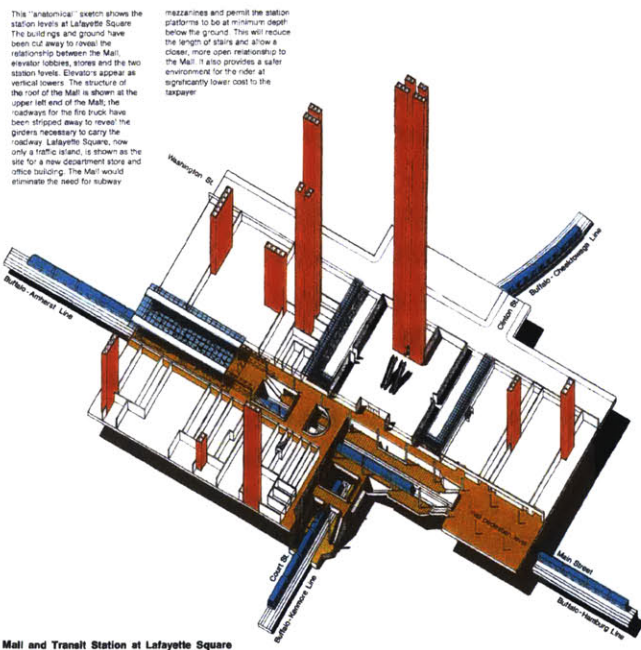


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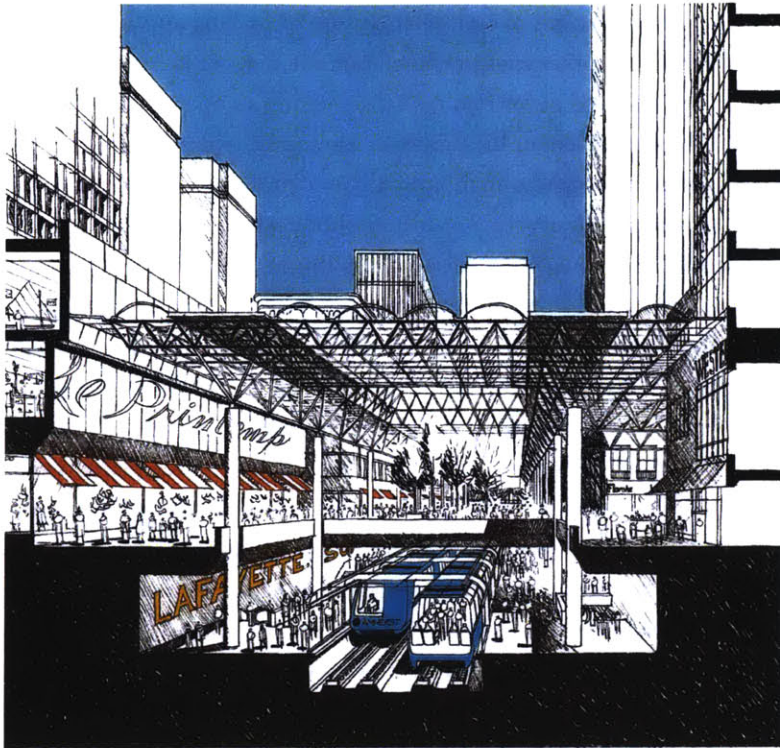
The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York (1971).
Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (WMRT).

above: View of the Subway Mall, Illustration by Thomas A. Todd (from Presentation Drawings by American Architects, Kemper, 1977)

*right: Anatomical Sketch
previous page: Conceptual Plan Diagrams*



Mall and Transit Station at Lafayette Square



5.16

Sectional Perspective of the enclosed Subway/Transit Mall. *The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York* (1971). Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (WMRT).

the Marine Midland Center then under construction and the Main Place Tower completed in 1969.⁷²⁵ Like Pei's Plan for Oklahoma City, WMRT built a model of the entire site (albeit less detailed) to show the scale of the developments to occur, a photograph of which was included in the plan document itself. In addition to the land uses indicated in the site plan, WMRT included elaborate sections to show the transformation of the Buffalo skyline over the next twenty years⁷²⁶ and a series of diagrams that "pulled apart"⁷²⁷ the different levels of the plan in a titled axonometric drawing. Through these diagrams, the plan demonstrated "the interlocking nature of the various elements of the plan,"⁷²⁸ connected via a series of elevated and subterranean walkways, elevator shafts (denoting skyscrapers), and structured parking garages. One of the most unique elements of the scheme included in the plan was an abstract "anatomical sketch"⁷²⁹ showing a sample chunk of Main Street. The sketch illustrated the elements of the complex in the form of a megastructure, whose elevators, escalators, enclosed pedestrian mall, and subways formed a contiguous and uninterrupted sequence capable of "offer[ing] shoppers an environment which not only affords the amenities and features available to suburban

725 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 15.

726 *Ibid.*, 16-17.

727 *Ibid.*, 20.

728 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

729 *Ibid.*, 27.

shopping center patrons of convenience, ease of parking and access, and comfortable all weather environment,” but one that could “offer more.”⁷³⁰

An enclosed pedestrian mall overlooking an open-air subway marked the centerpiece of the proposal. Three renderings were included in the plan to illustrate its environment—one showing a perspectival view of the enclosed mall, a second of the outdoor portion of the mall where it connected to the convention center, and a third, as a sectional perspective drawing with an accompanying conventional section, illustrating threads of connectivity between the enclosed mall and the subway running through downtown.⁷³¹ Thomas A. Todd, the partner in charge of urban design at WMRT, delineated the main perspective drawings for the plan.⁷³² His drawings provide a vision of a convivial interior space in the pedestrian mall, including planters bursting with tulips, sidewalk cafes with colorful umbrellas, immense signs draped from the ceiling, and even a woman in furs walking her dog.⁷³³ In section, added to the complexity of the scene were indoor vendors and kiosks, set against the backdrop of a variegated façade of new and existing storefronts. A unique, modular steel space frame with acrylic domes to funnel light into the interior was shown in detail,⁷³⁴ including a diagram demonstrating how emergency vehicles could access the roof of the mall in the event of a fire.

The Regional Center: Contextual Reading

In spite of the ambition of WMRT’s proposal for downtown Buffalo, the name of the plan itself—the Regional Center—reflected the challenge that unabated decentralization had wrought for the implementation of such a comprehensive downtown vision. By 1968, when the firm won the competition to plan Downtown Buffalo, the politics of urban renewal were changing. Race riots in cities across the United States had prompted President Lyndon B. Johnson to enact the Model Cities legislation in 1966, an effort to introduce citizen participation and paralleled by ambitious anti-poverty programs in response to the widespread dissatisfaction and racial tensions brought about by urban renewal, interstate highway programs, and increasing racial isolation in inner cities. Between 1960 and 1970, Buffalo’s urban population fell from 532,759 to 462,768. Over the next decade, the city would lose over 100,000 additional residents, dropping to 357,870, and that decline would continue, though at a slower rate. During that same period, the metropolitan population of Buffalo lost

730 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 18.

731 Ibid, 26-30.

732 Todd’s signature is visible on the newspaper that one of his scale figures is reading on page 19 of the plan.

733 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 19.

734 Ibid, 28.

only 80,000 people. Though the *Regional Center* plan presented a growth strategy for Buffalo, that strategy was consistently qualified throughout the report. “If the Plan is implemented,” it read, “there is every reason to anticipate a bright future for the regional center and spin-off advantages for the entire Region... Conversely, without it, without action, the City will wither.”⁷³⁵

As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, Buffalo had been planned on the modified footprint of a Baroque capital in 1804 by the surveyor Joseph Ellicott, whose brother had assumed the commission for the Washington D.C. plan after L’Enfant’s dismissal. While the city had commissioned Frederick Law Olmsted to produce one of his earliest and most comprehensive parks system plans starting in the 1860s, by the early 1900s, that plan needed to be supplemented with a new vision. In 1920, the city hired Edward H. Bennett, who had been Daniel Burnham’s partner in producing plans for San Francisco and Chicago, and the engineer William Parsons. Bennett’s plan, which was also discussed in Chapter One, anticipated the need to accommodate the automobile with the inclusion of a “circuit traffic way”⁷³⁶ known as “the Concourse” around the city’s downtown. It also provided a neoclassical design for the Buffalo City Hall at Niagara Square, a project that was eventually completed in the Art Deco style by the architectural firm Dietel, Wade, and Jones in 1931.

During the Depression, pre-war suburbanization, high real estate assessments, and low revenues downtown preempted a panic among downtown stakeholders.⁷³⁷ In 1939, consumed by the need to solve the traffic congestion hampering downtown business, the Buffalo City Planning Association and local city leaders hired Walter Behrendt, a German architect and city planner who had been active in the Bauhaus and was then teaching at Dartmouth College in the 1930s.⁷³⁸ Behrendt was recruited to teach city planning at Buffalo (as part of its new “Planning and Experiment Station”) and to develop a master plan for the city. In 1939, he published a plan for the reclamation of the Buffalo waterfront as a recreational space under the title—*Buffalo’s Waterfront Today...and*

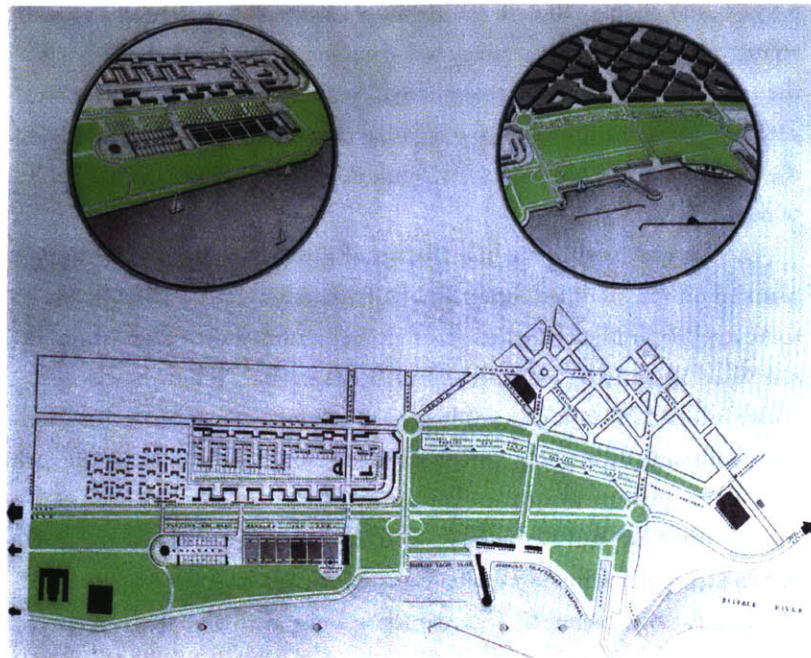
735 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 1.

736 Bennett, *Buffalo*, 9.

737 Mark Goldman. *City on the Edge*. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007), 121. For a full discussion of Behrendt’s role in Buffalo City Planning in the late 1930s, read Goldman, 120-129.

738 Goldman, 123.

5.17
Buffalo's Waterfront Today...and Tomorrow. Walter Behrendt; Buffalo City Planning Association, Inc., 1939. Courtesy of Loeb Library, Harvard



Tomorrow.^{739,740} The centerpiece of Behrendt's proposal was the elimination of the city's railroad tracks in favor of a vast recreational waterfront that could sure up downtown investments. He also included in his scheme a "speedway" that could route traffic around downtown and parking lots along the rear of the city's main retail streets. Though not discussed at length in the plan, Behrendt included in his proposal a substantial renewal area near the waterfront on which he placed a series of modern housing blocks, foreshadowing the area where a housing complex designed by Paul Rudolph would eventually be constructed.

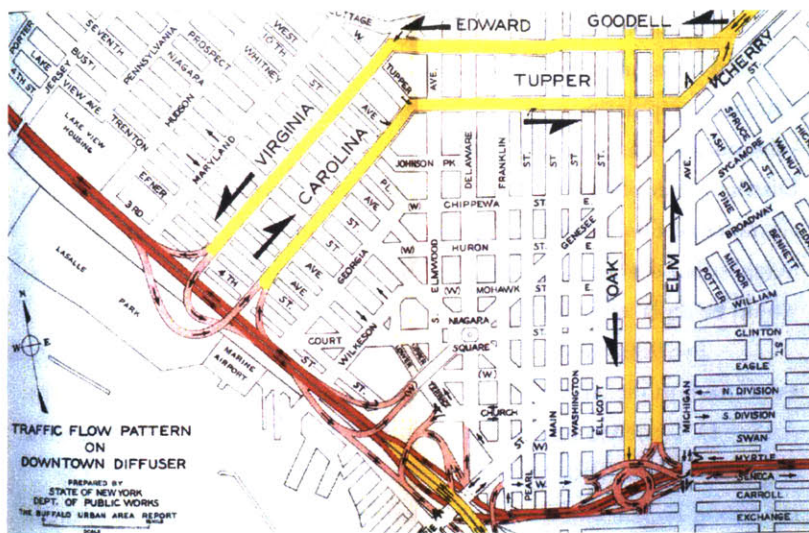
By 1940, the downtown's share of retail sales had fallen from 52% in 1930 to 25%.⁷⁴¹ While more than half of the city's property taxes were generated through real estate in the CBD, real property values had been declining since the late 1920s.⁷⁴² Buffalo enjoyed a brief boom during World War II as a result of its shipbuilding and manufacturing industries, but after the war, the downtown suffered. In 1944, foreseeing the need for postwar planning, the city invited planner Ladislav Segoe to address

739 *Buffalo's Waterfront Today...and Tomorrow* (Buffalo, NY: Buffalo City Planning Association, Inc., 1939).

740 *Ibid.*, 1. See Foreword. It is both interesting and fortuitous to note that the technical assistant for the waterfront plan was Arthur D. McVoy, who later went on to lead Baltimore's City Planning Department and is widely credited with initiating the concept of reclaiming that city's Inner Harbor. This finding is purely speculation and is not substantiated by evidence from McVoy's papers. Nonetheless, McVoy's involvement in Behrendt's waterfront proposal for Buffalo must have had some influence on his thinking about waterfront reclamation and may have been a driving force behind that idea's application in Baltimore.

741 Goldman, 142.

742 *Ibid.*, 143.



5.18
 “Traffic Flow Pattern on Downtown Diffuser.” *Urban Area Report on the New York State Thruway and Arterial Routes in the Buffalo Area* (1946).

its City Planning Association.⁷⁴³ Segoe provided a note of caution to the coalition. “We can no longer afford to be extravagant and wasteful,” he declared. “Planning for our cities, as for the use of our national resources, must henceforth be directed toward conservation and protection of what is satisfactory, rehabilitation of what is still capable of being salvaged, and redevelopment of what is deteriorated beyond repair.”⁷⁴⁴ Segoe called on Buffalo to draft two critical items—first, a plan for the revitalization of its downtown, and second, a strategy to harness and contain its increasing decentralization.

In 1946, working with Segoe, the New York State Department of Public Works released an *Urban Area Report on the New York State Thruway and Arterial Routes in the Buffalo Area*,⁷⁴⁵ which provided comprehensive details for the access provisions necessary to bring people in and out of Buffalo’s center. The *Urban Area Report* contained virtually none of the provisions recommended in Behrendt’s waterfront vision. Instead, it roughly adapted Bennett and Parsons’ idea for a circuit traffic way, designing three massive interchanges along the edge of downtown with a regional circumferential highway rather than a smaller scale urban loop. Along the eastern edge of downtown, a highway connector was proposed on Elm and Oak streets, providing direct access into the Central Business District. Included in the report was a rendering of a multi-story parking garage, foreshadowing the terminal facilities that would be proposed in later downtown plans.

743 Ladislav Segoe. Address for the Meeting of the Buffalo City Planning Association, March 13, 1944.

744 Ibid, 1.

745 *Urban Area Report on the New York State Thruway and Arterial Routes in the Buffalo Area*. (New York, NY: New York State Department of Public Works, 1946.)

In the 1950s, Buffalo aggressively pursued the urban renewal funds that had been unlocked by the Housing Act of 1949. The city's African-American population had grown substantially during the war and then subsequently ghettoized in to an area of the East Side known as the Ellicott District. After obtaining funds through the Housing Acts, the city began clearance of Ellicott in 1958 and also condemned an Italian-American neighborhood nestled between the Thruway and the Waterfront, which would be replaced by new, higher-income housing.⁷⁴⁶

In 1960, the Greater Buffalo Development Foundation, a business association modeled after Pittsburgh's Allegheny Conference⁷⁴⁷ hired the Arthur D. Little Company, a consulting firm, to produce a report on the city's downtown. The report, the *Buffalo Downtown Study; a Report to the City of Buffalo and the Greater Buffalo Development Foundation*, made several recommendations consistent with the prevailing trends at the time. It called for the city to develop a plan that could "meet the requirements and tasks of today's and tomorrow's shoppers,"⁷⁴⁸ with a self-contained center city complex consisting of "an enclosed retail mall, underground parking, and a new office tower,"⁷⁴⁹ which the report likened to Rockefeller Center and would become a "sanctuary of shopping."⁷⁵⁰ While the report laid the groundwork for Buffalo's urban renewal policies, its findings synthesized ideas the city had been considering for years. As early as 1954, city planners had considered turning "five blocks of downtown Main Street into a garden-like shopping mall from which all vehicular traffic would be barred."⁷⁵¹

Little's report became the blueprint for the reconstruction of downtown,⁷⁵² leading to both the Main Place Mall and Marine Midland Center projects that would be constructed in the mid-1960s.⁷⁵³ Motivated by the report to begin urban renewal in the downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods, the business community brought together a group of five local architectural firms known as the Architect's Redevelopment Collaborative, who proposed a fourteen-acre superblock in the

746 Goldman, 175.

747 Ibid, 191.

748 Arthur D. Little, Inc. *Buffalo Downtown Study; a Report to the City of Buffalo and the Greater Buffalo Development Foundation* (Cambridge, MA: The Greater Buffalo Development Foundation, 1960). Little report as quoted in Goldman, 191.

749 Goldman, 192.

750 Little Report as quoted in Goldman, 193.

751 "Buffalo Outlines 'Facelifting' Plan," *The New York Times*. September 26, 1954.

752 Goldman, 193.

753 It is also worth noting that the city also hired the architect Charles Luckman to design a 17-acre business development similar to the Prudential Center in 1963. That proposal included many of the components seen in other downtown plans. The concept is reviewed in a New York Times article "Heart of Buffalo is to be Renewed; 17-Acre Complex will Include Four Office Towers," *New York Times*. June 23, 1963.

downtown.⁷⁵⁴ Though not realized at that scale, among the outcomes was the Main Place Mall, designed by the architects Harrison & Abramowitz and opened in 1969.⁷⁵⁵ The Mall included a 26-story tower, a 1,000 car three level garage, and 40,000 square feet of mall space. It replaced an area then known as the “Kremlin Block,”⁷⁵⁶ named for the 1832 Kremlin Hall building and composed of “a random group of small mid-nineteenth century office buildings that somehow managed to fit into the tiny triangle of land between Main, Niagara, Eagle, and Shelton Square.”⁷⁵⁷ The mall truncated Buffalo’s radial street system, which was viewed as an impediment to efficient traffic circulation in multiple plans from the era. As part of its design, Main Place included a structured parking garage and two-story enclosed shopping street running parallel to Main Street.

Buffalo’s urban renewal plans along the waterfront, meanwhile, faced setbacks after the city had already cleared the entire site. Despite being designated for urban renewal in 1958 and cleared in the early 1960s, the site had yet to attract a developer. In 1967, the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC) acquired the land, and under its Director Edward Logue, who took over the UDC in 1968, hired the architect Paul Rudolph to design a massive waterfront residential complex, “a new town in town.”⁷⁵⁸ While Rudolph’s design for the waterfront (a similar yet scaled down version of his proposal for New York’s East River) consisted of both a series of low-rise modular housing blocks and seven towers along a waterfront marina (marked as “waterfront development phase 2” in the WMRT plan), only part of the low-rise portion of the plan was ever completed based on his design.

In the downtown, meanwhile, following upon the success of the first phase of urban renewal in 1963, the city hired John Graham and Company, the architecture firm of the first regional shopping mall in the United States at Northgate in Seattle, to prepare a plan for the downtown.⁷⁵⁹ The Graham plan, published in 1966, focused on an “urban renewal area north” and proposed a basic concept similar to portions of the later WMRT plan for downtown, including a large enclosed retail center that formed a superblock across the northern section of downtown emanating towards the waterfront. Like the later WMRT plan and the Main Place Mall then under construction, Graham’s proposal, called for a structural glass ceiling and pedestrianized main street corridor, though the

754 Goldman, 195.

755 Redstone, 232-234.

756 Goldman, 197.

757 Ibid, Ibid.

758 Ibid, 206.

759 John Graham & Company. *Downtown Renewal Study: Plans and Recommendations* (Buffalo, NY: Greater Buffalo Development Foundation, 1966)

scope of the plan did not provide details on the latter.

In 1968, when WMRT was retained to create a plan for Buffalo,⁷⁶⁰ New York, they encountered a city whose circumstances had been going steadily downhill since the war. Assessing the plan, Buffalo historian Mark Goldman described it in these terms:

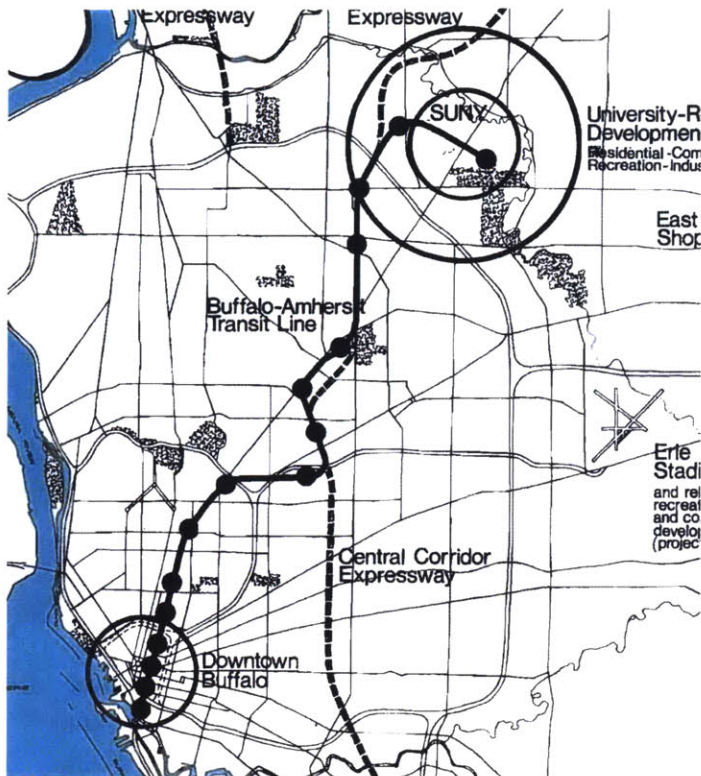
“The worse things got downtown; the more people, businesses, and stores left; the more grandiose, ambitious, outrageous, and removed from reality became the plans advanced for its renewal...Drawn up over the course of a year, and in consultation with a long list of downtown bankers, lawyers, and businessmen, this was to be the uber-urban renewal plan, a transcendent, transformative approach to downtown renewal that would exceed in scope, cost, and impact anything yet tried... This plan, like Little’s plan less than ten years earlier, was surreal in its failure to understand the current reality of the city. The artist’s renderings in the report showed tulips planted everywhere, elegant couples, all of them white, promenading up and down a covered pedestrian mall on Main Street, and still others sitting at outdoor cafes as if they were on the boulevards of Paris. Where, some wondered, was the gritty reality that was downtown Buffalo in the mid-1970s. Where were the bag ladies, the bums in their wool stocking caps, the clusters of African American teenagers, the wig shops, and the stores that sold knock-off designer sweat suits and outsized costume jewelry? Nothing could have been more alien to the current reality of the city than the plan proposed by these cynical planners from Philadelphia and their clueless clients in Buffalo. Everything about it was wrong and misguided. Where had they been for the past twenty years as Buffalo, like other great cities of the Northeast, in decline for years, stood at the brink of desolation and despair?”⁷⁶¹

For all of the criticism levied by Goldman at the plan’s detachment from Buffalo’s increasingly grim reality, the WMRT plan anticipated many of the changes that would ultimately manifest in Buffalo’s downtown over the next decade and a half. One area in which the plan proved especially important was in its emphasis on transit.

The rapid decline of public transportation in the 1940s and 1950s produced an intractable dilemma for those dependent upon it, which marked an increasingly poor and isolated spectrum of society. In Buffalo, the situation was no different. The International Railway Corporation (IRC), Buffalo and Niagara Fall’s longtime streetcar operator, had been

760 Wallace’s memoirs do not indicate how WMRT obtained the job, though he implies that it was based on a competition. One possibility is that Wallace engineered the downtown plan for WMRT based on his connection to Martin Meyerson, with whom he would have had a connection while a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and who was President of the State University of Buffalo from 1966-1970, coinciding directly with the year the firm started the project in 1968.

761 Goldman, 270-273. Goldman’s analysis of an interim report for the plan showed that its clients might have been blind to the changes afoot in their city. A draft of the WMRT plan that expressed doubts about the necessity of a downtown expressway, the Elm-Oak Arterial, was circled in the report with the notation “Rewrite!” beside it (Goldman, 273).



losing money since the 1920s, and replaced its interurban rail service with buses in 1937. Without dedicated rights of way and with falling revenues, ridership, and stagnant fares, the streetcars declined precipitously. The entire system was converted to buses in 1950, at which point IRC was replaced by the Niagara Frontier Transit System (NFT).⁷⁶² In 1967, New York State took NFT over as part of a nationwide effort to create regional transportation authorities under public supervision. The newly formed Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) sought to take advantage of new federal monies being administered under the newly formed Urban Mass Transit Administration (later the Federal Transit Administration), which had been created in 1964. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy had foreshadowed the nation's newfound commitment to public transportation, declaring in a speech to Congress that the "national welfare...requires the provision of good urban transportation." Under Johnson, the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 passed with provisions for a 50 percent match to cover the capital costs of new rail projects.⁷⁶³

The prospect of creating a subway for Buffalo gained momentum

5.19

(left)

Proposed Transit System for Buffalo.

The Regional Center: A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Buffalo, New York (1971). Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd (WMRT).

5.20

(above)

Promotional Poster for Subway Mall.

Metro Rail Report, 1973, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA).

762 See Fogelson, *Downtown*, 250-251 for a discussion of the decline of streetcar operations in American cities.

763 Later Mass Transit Acts included provisions for operating costs as well.

5.21

Main Place Mall, Buffalo New York.
February 2016. Photograph by
Author.



in 1970,⁷⁶⁴ when NFTA “initiated a feasibility study for an exclusive right-of-way transit line in the Buffalo/Amherst Corridor as part of its Mass Transit Study.”⁷⁶⁵ Though Buffalo’s transit ridership was “relatively low among large cities,” it remained “high among those dependent upon buses alone.”⁷⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the WMRT plan suggests that the ultimate justification for the transit plan had more to do with re-centralizing downtown for regional consumers than on resolving an existing transportation problem. “The Downtown Main Street Mall and the proposed subway” were stated as “the key elements in making...\$60 to \$80 million [of] growth possible” in the downtown.⁷⁶⁷ The design of the mall further reflected its retail motivations. The open-air subway would effectively serve as a conveyor belt to bring suburban shoppers back downtown from the suburbs of Amherst and Hamburg and as a physical extension of the mall itself. The recent decampment of Buffalo’s State University from northern Buffalo to suburban Amherst, moreover, certainly fueled the imperative for transit planning, while reflecting the downtown’s heightened anxiety.⁷⁶⁸ That state highway engineers believed the subway had the potential to “reduce the magnitude of street and highway improvements that would otherwise be needed to meet the

764 In his memoir, Wallace says that the firm won a competition for the Downtown Buffalo plan in 1968. The nature of the report and the precise timeline for its realization suggests that either the potential for a subway had been broached seriously by 1969 or that work on the report was delayed to align with the subway proposal.

765 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 33.

766 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

767 *Ibid.*, 3.

768 *Ibid.*, 4.



5.22
Main Street Transit Mall, Buffalo
New York, February 2016.
Photograph by Author.

growing traffic demands of commuter work trips⁷⁶⁹ only reinforced its position in service of white suburban commuters rather than public transit users themselves.

The Regional Center: Temporal Reading

While the WMRT Plan suggested that the Buffalo-Amherst line could be largely finished by 1980, the system, in a diminished form, ultimately took almost fourteen years (from the release of the WMRT plan) to implement. Whereas initial proposals called for a subway system, much like those that would be constructed in the 1970s in Atlanta and San Francisco, Buffalo's continued decline, sluggish transit ridership, and near complete reliance on federal funding (an 80 percent share) resulted in only a partial subway using newly introduced light rail cars.⁷⁷⁰ At 6.4 miles, half of the original proposed length, the system stopped right at the edge of Buffalo, kept out of the suburbs after considerable protest. While the system ran as a subway outside of the downtown, the cars rose at Buffalo's Main Street to become a Transit Mall, similar in its configuration to the Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis and the newly built 16th Street Transit Mall in Denver, finished in 1981. By the mid-1980s, the pedestrian mall was going out of fashion as a resolution to downtown woes and the forces of historic preservation loomed over the project. Preservationists picked apart the design of the mall meticulously. Susan A. McCartney, the president of the Preservation Coalition of Erie County, took issue with a four-

769 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 4.

770 Buffalo had the first "modern light rail system" in the United States.

story windscreen meant to block gusts coming off of Lake Erie.⁷⁷¹ Others threatened to pursue complaints under the National Historic Preservation Act to prevent “new construction...out of character with the surrounding architecture.”⁷⁷² Criticizing Buffalo’s transit mall, Anthony Downs, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said in 1983, “The main advantage of a subway is that it’s a gigantic public works project. But once it’s built, it doesn’t pay for itself. To think you’re going to rebuild downtown Buffalo on the basis of retailing is ridiculous. It’ll never happen.”⁷⁷³

The WMRT plan came to partial fruition in a city whose population had declined almost one-third since its adoption and whose economy had all but collapsed. Though the city’s new convention center was then under development, and new hotels were sprouting alongside the mall, these projects “would not have been possible without transit subsidies, urban development action grants, community development funds and other forms of federal aid.”⁷⁷⁴ In 1990, after only four years of operation, the NFTA shut down the entire subway system, only four years old, citing financial insolvency.⁷⁷⁵ Though the system reopened shortly thereafter, prolonged disputes over its financing and the continued decline of downtown rendered the optimistic growth projections of the WMRT plan a harbinger of an era that had already passed.

In 2015, Buffalo reopened Main Street to traffic, a project that had been considered as early as 1994. The new design of the street allowed for mixed traffic, combining cars and light rail, as well as dedicated bicycle lanes along certain segments of the corridor.⁷⁷⁶ In a 1994 article suggesting a rethinking of the “car ban,”⁷⁷⁷ Harold L. Cohen, the dean emeritus of SUNY Buffalo’s School of Architecture and Planning who had fought for the redesignation of parts of downtown as a historic theater district in the late 1970s, reflected on its fate. “All the things that were supposed to be done to make it a pedestrian mall weren’t done. You can’t blame the poor flower if it didn’t grow because you didn’t water it.”

At the ceremony held for the re-opening of Main Street, led by Buffalo’s Mayor Byron Brown, one of the project’s champions, offered the following comment. “The closing of Main Street to cars over 33 years ago, while well-intentioned, ultimately resulted in widespread vacancies,

771 “Buffalo Mall Design Provokes Dispute,” *The New York Times*, February 19, 1984.

772 “Design Provokes Dispute,” *Ibid.*

773 “Buffalo: Great Dreams, But Greater Needs: City, Losing Population and Jobs, Fights Back With Development,” *The New York Times*, April 18, 1983.

774 “Great Dreams,” *Ibid.*

775 “Buffalo Transit System Shuts: First in U.S.,” *The New York Times*, April 2, 1990.

776 “Cars Sharing Main Street,” The Department of Public Works, Parks, and Streets, City of Buffalo, Accessed March, 2016, https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/Public_Works_Parks_Streets/CarsSharingMainStreet.

777 “Buffalo Rethinks Downtown Car Ban,” *The New York Times*, February 22, 1994.

lost property and tax value, and hampered efforts to attract new businesses and employers to our region. But that mistake is now in our past.”⁷⁷⁸ That the pedestrian mall had killed downtown made a convenient scapegoat for the persistent failures of regional planning; the flight of the state university beyond city limits; entrenched racial segregation; and the postwar retail decentralization that continues to undermine downtown’s prospects.⁷⁷⁹

WMRT’s 1971 *Regional Center* plan for Buffalo marked both a point of crystallization as well as a falling action in the narrative of central business district planning. The basic tenets of the plan—circumferential highways, peripheral parking structures, and a pedestrian retail mall—had not changed, save for the inclusion of transit. Nonetheless, the circumstances and the context for action posed serious challenges to the plan’s feasibility as President Nixon began to pull back on urban renewal. In considering the plan’s importance, it is worth considering its significance in three respects—as a visual and architectural synthesis of ideas percolating since the 1950s; as an expression of new directions in federal urban policy; and lastly, as a counterpoint to the changing relationship between the public and the private sector, represented by the rise of the neoliberal urban agenda.

The visual character and graphic quality of the *Regional Center* plan reflected both the high quality of WMRT’s work as well as the skill of the firm’s lead urban designer Thomas A. Todd, who was responsible for many of its illustrative graphics. While the plan contains many traditional graphic strategies, including the perspectives of the mall interior and convention center, it experimented with new forms of representation, especially in relation to transit. The introduction of transit into the scheme created an opportunity for WMRT to experiment with variations on the pedestrian mall design, some of which recalled ideas for multi-level cities reminiscent of Harvey Corbett’s plans for New York or Eugene Hénard’s for Paris. In particular, their use of the “pulled apart” drawing and “anatomical sketch” reveal the likely influence of Edmund Bacon on both Wallace and Todd.⁷⁸⁰ Bacon’s 1963 *Center City, Plan for Center City Philadelphia* provided an inspiration for much of the plan’s representational strategies, given its similar use of sections that combine detailed historic

778 New York Senator Tim Kennedy as quoted in “Mayor Brown, Senator Schumer Celebrate The Return Of Vehicular Traffic To Main Street’s 500 Block: City of Buffalo takes another step forward in returning traffic to downtown Main Street paving the way for increased business and economic development activity.” December 15, 2015. https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Mayor/Home/Leadership/Press_Releases/500BlockMainStreet

779 “Return of Vehicular Traffic,” Ibid.

780 Wallace, 179. Ian McHarg and William Roberts led the firm’s landscape architecture work, while Wallace and Thomas Todd led planning and urban design.

building elevations with the outlines of future skyscrapers, as well as the utilization of titled perspectival diagrams to call out the primary structural components of the city's design. WMRT's 1966 *Plan for Lower Manhattan*, a plan a far greater depth and magnitude than Buffalo's, likewise demonstrates a clear lineage in terms of content and representational techniques, especially in its use of layered site plan drawings and its central pedestrian spine anchoring the proposal.

Architecturally, the enclosure of the Main Street Mall was consistent with prior plans by Little and Graham, as well as best practices at that time for other cold-weather cities in Canada and the United States. Rochester's Midtown Plaza, Montreal's extensive underground network introduced in 1967, Minneapolis' Gateway Center, Toronto's Eaton Centre (which Gruen had also consulted for), Quebec City's St. Roche Mall, and Niagara Falls' Rainbow Center (a Gruen Associates project completed in the mid-1970s) all provide excellent examples of this typology and its variations throughout the region. While far fewer examples existed of pedestrian malls that retained their existing facades within enclosed environments, many were proposed and one completed in Quebec City.⁷⁸¹

As an example of a CBD plan prepared after the racial upheaval of the mid-1960s, the WMRT plan seems less progressive. It pays relatively little attention to questions of race in the inner city. Buffalo, like many cities in the Northeast whose African-American populations had swelled in the 1940s and 1950s, had experienced a race riot on its East Side in 1967. While the focus of plan itself was on downtown, it contains almost no reference to any relationship between the CBD and the impoverished neighborhoods at its fringe, something that the Greater Buffalo Development Foundation might have been loathe to confront just as its first urban renewal projects, including Main Place Mall, were opening. In the illustrative site plan, six housing projects and multiple cleared and empty blocks are all that stands in the Ellicott urban renewal clearance area. The Elm-Oak Expressway, though never built, is shown in the plan as a vast moat between the East Side neighborhoods and downtown, a fortification to check the blight and racial turmoil spreading from the east. Though a subway line was initially proposed to the east side as a future expansion, the north-south orientation of the transit scheme reinforced its function as a pipeline from downtown retail markets to the affluent suburbs, rather than as a service for those dependent upon transit.

Considered in the aftermath of the benchmark urban policy

781 A similar treatment was proposed by Victor Gruen Associates for the retail core of Boston in 1967. A more typical application of this concept was to either bisect or end the main shopping street in an enclosed mall, such as that done for Plaza Pasadena in Pasadena, California. See Frieden et al., *Downtown, Inc.*, 88-106.

shifts of the late 1960s and the public-private partnerships that would characterize the late 1970s and 1980s, Buffalo's plan for renewing downtown remained tethered to an era that was quickly coming to an end. Though WMRT specified in its report that the mall itself would require general funds from the city, bond issues, and special tax levies, as well as potential funds from UDC and HUD.⁷⁸² Convincing local taxpayers to fund an unpopular urban renewal program that had already bulldozed neighborhoods only to find sites wanting for developers, created an impasse that could only be shepherded through further federal assistance. Other recommendations from the plan, such as the creation of a "non-profit corporation to promote the implementation of the Final Concept Plan and to contract for management of the Mall and the convention center on behalf of the City,"⁷⁸³ were realized, but not until 10 years later, in the form of downtown business improvement district called Buffalo Place. After opening in 1978, the convention center saw only half its anticipated traffic.⁷⁸⁴ The plan's emphasis on highways and "intercept" parking strategies, rooted in the Gruen era and elaborated in an age when "interlocking" urban structures bore the impressions of Montreal's Expo '67, overlooked the nascent movement towards historic preservation and cities of "human scale." Though WMRT's plan included token historic landmarks in its section drawings,⁷⁸⁵ it remained affixed to an essentially modernist outlook on the city—one oriented towards large scale urban surgery and comprehensive infrastructural improvements made possible by large-scale federal funding to cities.

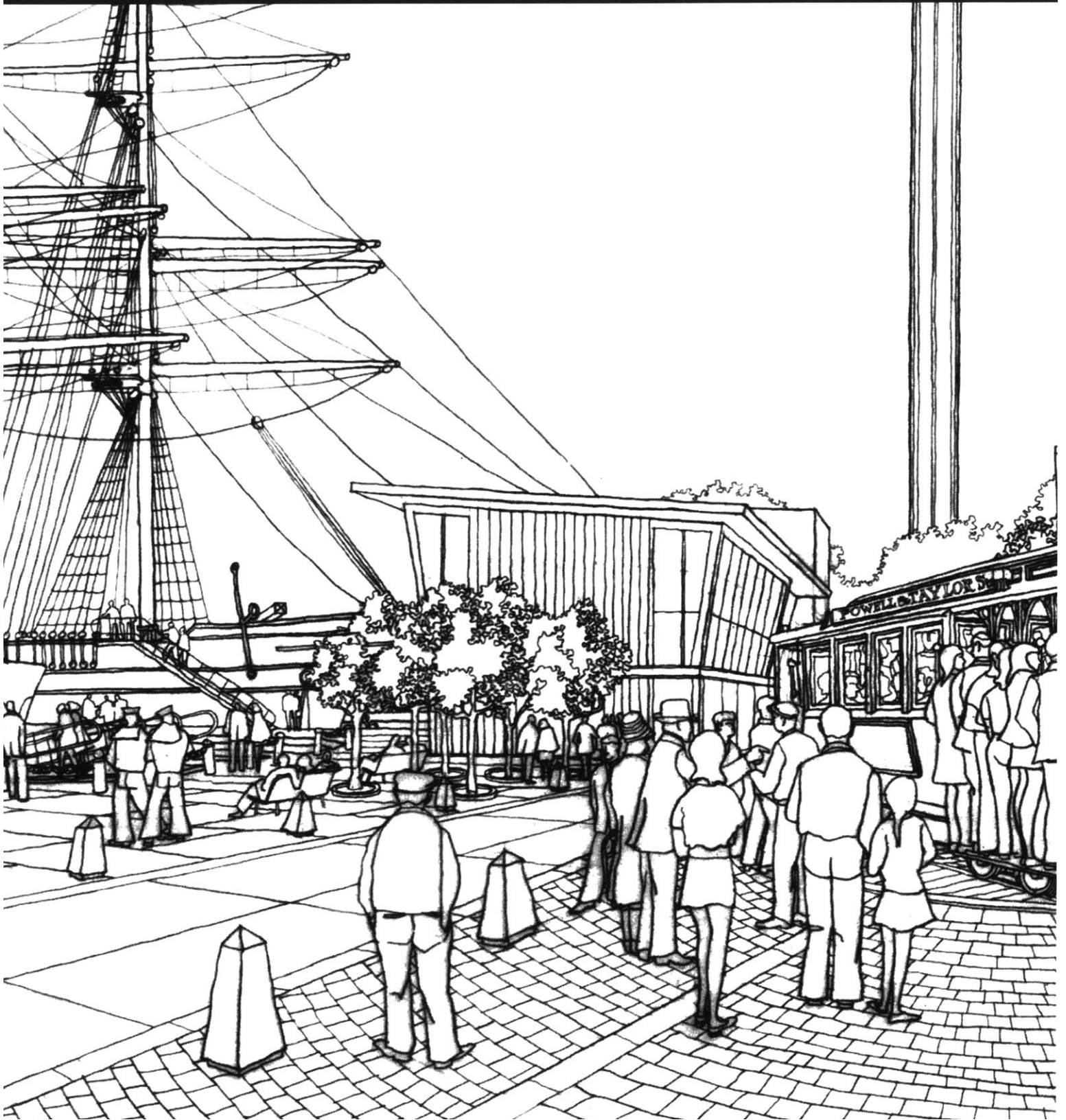
782 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 48.

783 Ibid, Ibid.

784 Frieden et al., *Downtown Inc.*, 271.

785 WMRT, *Regional Center*, 1, 6, 20.

CHAPTER SIX





FROM MALL TO MARKETPLACE

Historic Preservation and the Rise of the Festival Marketplace

“Our society will never be great until our cities are great. Today the frontier of imagination and innovation is inside those cities and not beyond their borders. New experiments are already going on. It will be the task of your generation to make the American city a place where future generations will come, not only to live, but to live the good life.”

- Lyndon B. Johnson, May 22, 1964, Ann Arbor, Michigan

“When we come down from the cloud a meaningful architecture will be created in our time. When we come to grips with our present, there is a chance we will influence the future. Isolation is a terrible state, and architecture of the mountain top has no relevance. Buildings communicate when they connect to the meaningful flow of our age. Architecture should reflect man’s hope and faith, interpret life and transmit joy. The very act of building is a symbolic act of confidence.”

- Benjamin Thompson⁷⁸⁶

“The Marketplace is an impersonation of a kind of urban life that no longer exists in most of America. It’s a theatrical representation of street life. It has to be, because that is a stage we have to go through as begin cautiously, self-consciously to re-enact the urban culture we abandoned.”

- Robert Campbell, “Evaluation: Boston’s Upper of Urbanity,”
ALA Journal, June 1981, 29

Planners’ People

In 1966, Edward Wood, Sidney Brower, and Margaret Latimer, planners in the city of Baltimore’s Community Renewal Program, co-authored an article entitled “Planners’ People.” In the article, they pointed out what was by then becoming obvious to anyone who travelled downtown in the mid-1960s—that the people depicted in the fanciful renderings of Fort

6.1

Northern Waterfront Plan, San Francisco, 1968. Charles D. Rushing and John Bolles.
Credit: *Presentation Drawings by American Architects* (Kemper, 1977).

⁷⁸⁶ Benjamin Thompson as quoted in Muriel Emanuel. *Contemporary Architects*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1980), 815.



6.2

Those excluded from Planners' People. "Planners' People," JAIP 32.4 (1966). Drawings by Catherine Bower

Worth, Charles Center, Fresno, and countless other downtown plans, no longer reflected its reality. "Planners' people are the people who appear in planners' drawings," they wrote. "They are conceived in order to satisfy the demands of the perspective sketch, a graphic device which is widely used in the presentation of physical planning proposals because it offers the reader an illusion of reality. The demands of realism cannot, however, go half-satisfied and, just as real buildings and open spaces must look desired if they are to look desirable, so planners' drawings of proposed buildings and open spaces must include signs of occupancy if they are to appear attractive. The most vivid signs of occupancy are provided by glimpses of the occupants themselves and so it is that we find images of occupants introduced into the drawings and, caught in the web of realism, they acquire costume, features, and purpose and appear not simply as person-like shapes, but as people."⁷⁸⁷

Drawing from sixteen central business district plans completed from the 1949 to 1964, the article parodied the aspirational characters that inhabited the planners' perspective sketch—the gentleman with the briefcase; the fashionable lady; the mother and child; the young lovers; the viewer; and the boulevardier. Of these types, the authors hypothesized. "If the urban reality provides any clue to prevalent values and attitudes, then a glance around any American city is sufficient to confirm that those listed above are not representative of a great many people. They are, however, clearly representative of the group to which most planners themselves belong, with whom they work in the office and socialize at home...[T]he lesson of planners' people is important, for not only does it question the validity of the perspective sketch as currently used to present professional planning recommendations but it questions the effectiveness of the planner in serving the needs and desires of all sections of the community."⁷⁸⁸

In the margins of the article, the authors included a series of rough sketches depicting those characters who had been left out of the planners' perspectives: an elderly immigrant woman with a headscarf; a homeless man warming his hands over a trash can fire; an African-American woman waiting for the bus; shopkeepers; corner boys; and shifty-eyed single men.⁷⁸⁹ Writing 22 years later, Peter King would describe a similar scene at Fresno's Fulton Mall.

"Only transients walk the mall after dark, and they tend to step quickly, steer to the shadows and don't even window shop. No one else comes downtown to

⁷⁸⁷ Edward Wood, Jr., Sidney N. Brower, and Margaret W. Latimer. "Planners' People," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 32.4 (1966): 228.

⁷⁸⁸ Wood et al., 233.

⁷⁸⁹ These sketches were done by Sidney Brower's wife, Katherine Brower. Based on correspondence with Sidney Brower, March 9, 2016.

admire the expensive art pieces, or dip hands in the gurgling fountains, or hear the music piper from strategically placed speakers. The music, though, plays all night, serenading the trees and benches. The concrete void yawning through downtown mocks the notion of what was to have been—once automobiles were banished from the city’s heart, once the forces of suburbia were thwarted, once Fresno had established itself as a bold pathfinder on the urban frontier...[D]uring the day at least, the mall is used...By retired old men in thrift store suits who sun themselves on benches. By a woman with stringy hair and too much tan who admires her reflection in store windows as she mimics the poses of the mannequins—window shopping for herself. By a tough-looking woman who puts down her supermarket tabloid and pummels an old man with his own cane for a lewd remark.⁷⁹⁰ By a sidewalk preacher who screams in Spanish from the very stage where, on a bright September day 24 years ago, the governor of California hailed ‘a bold and beautiful new look in American cities.’⁷⁹¹



Between the opening of Fresno’s Fulton Mall in 1964 and the declaration by many in the late 1980s that pedestrian malls had “fail[ed] to fulfill [the] promise of revitalizing downtown,”⁷⁹² the plight of the American downtown became a crisis. The scene of downtown Fresno had become a caricature for central business districts around the country, as “the benches, trees and fountains” mimicking the amenities of suburban malls had “proved more of a draw for derelicts and delinquents than shoppers.”⁷⁹³



The failure of the pedestrian mall, however, was not the end of the downtown. Rather, as many malls failed, a new breed of project—the festival marketplace—became a winning strategy for downtown renewal and importantly, for historic preservation. Most popularly associated with Boston’s Faneuil Hall Marketplace, opened in 1976, festival marketplaces and downtown retail centers proliferated from the early 1970s through the early 1990s.⁷⁹⁴ While not all of these projects were successful, the perception of their success in the public imagination offers a cause for comparison between the pedestrian mall and the festival marketplace, prompting speculation as to why the former failed while the latter thrived.



790 The dismantling of state mental health institutions, known as deinstitutionalization, beginning in 1960s in California and then accelerating in the 1980s under President Ronald Reagan, has been put forward as one factor that led to an increase in those with mental health problems becoming increasingly visible in downtowns. See E. Fuller Torrey. *American Psychosis: How the Federal Government Destroyed the Mental Illness Treatment System* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

791 Peter King. “Rise and Fall of Urban Mall,” *The Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1988.

792 Laurie M. Grossman. “City Pedestrian Malls Fail to Fulfill Promise of Revitalizing Downtown,” *The Wall Street Journal*. June 17, 1987.

793 Grossman, *Ibid.*

794 Frieden et al., 171. Though festival marketplaces are the focus of this chapter, it is important to note that many downtown retail centers and mixed-use centers thrived in this era as well. For a full discussion, see Frieden and Sagalyn, *Downtown Inc.*, Chapter 9.

Chapters Three and Four of this thesis analyzed the early pedestrian malls and downtown plans created by Victor Gruen Associates, including Gruen's well known efforts in Fort Worth and Fresno. In Chapter Five, downtown plans by I.M. Pei and WMRT provided a basis for comparison to Gruen in both plan making strategies and pedestrianization. In the course of this discussion, several important themes have emerged. The festival modernism that characterized the plans of Victor Gruen presented a distinct contrast to the superblock modernism of Pei and showed key differences with the urban renewal plans of WMRT. Different styles of graphic and technical representation in plan making, as well as modes of implementation, indicate how plan makers understood the ideals and circumstances governing their proposals as well as the motives of their clients.

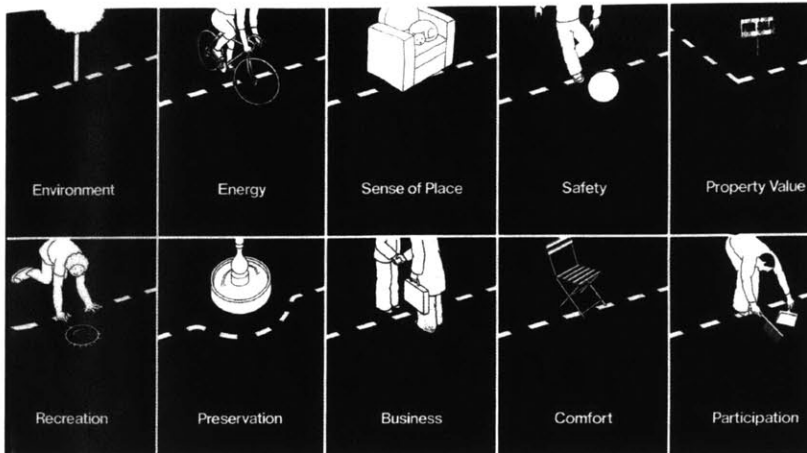
The final chapter of this thesis addresses two threads in downtown planning and development. The first section will address the fate of the pedestrian mall after 1964, the year Fresno's Fulton Mall opened, which is accepted here as the crystallization of the pedestrian mall as an aspirational urban ideal.⁷⁹⁵ While Fresno marked only the fifth permanent pedestrian mall ever implemented in the United States, its success spawned a decade of imitators and it was widely viewed as a model by other cities.⁷⁹⁶ The malls built after Fresno, with few exceptions, struggled to retain customers and most were eventually removed.⁷⁹⁷ This discussion will chart the development and debate surrounding pedestrian malls over a twenty-year period from 1964 to 1984. The first phase will look at the malls implemented between 1964 and 1974, the year when fifteen malls, the most of any individual year, were constructed. The second phase will look at those malls constructed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, tracing the gradual shift towards transit malls exemplified in the 1982 16th Street Transit Mall in Denver by I.M. Pei & Associates.

The second half of this chapter will trace the rise of the festival marketplace from Gas Light Square in St. Louis in 1950s, one of the first projects to express the basic tenets of what would become the festival

⁷⁹⁵ Fresno's position at the zenith the pedestrian mall movement is posited here for multiple reasons. The mall enjoyed significant press coverage at its opening and was an award-winning project lauded by federal officials as exemplary. Its design is widely viewed as the apex of such projects, due in large part to the role of Eckbo. The mall's opening prior to the race riots that wracked the country in the mid-1960s, may have also contributed to its positive reception, though this is conjectural only.

⁷⁹⁶ Lady Bird Johnson highlighted the mall by showing a promotional video of its success at a White House dinner in 1968. The mall won an award for Design Excellence from HUD that same year. See Victor Gruen Associates. *Fresno: A City Reborn*, 16 mm, (1968, Fresno, Fresno County Public Library) Film, <http://www.pbs.org/video/2365191238/>.

⁷⁹⁷ Among the "successful" malls built after Fresno, most have thrived at least in part due to their location in college towns (such as Boulder, CO and Burlington, VT) and beach side locations (such as Miami Beach and Santa Monica, CA). Others were built later and have had strong and consistent management. Denver's 16th Street Transit Mall provides a good example of this type.



6.3

“New Principles for Pedestrianization”

For Pedestrians Only: Planning, Design, and Management of Traffic Free Zones. Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo, 1977

marketplace, through the projects spearheaded by James Rouse and the architect Ben Thompson in 1970s and 1980s. The career of James Rouse, the mortgage banker-turned-developer who actively participated in and helped to shape nearly every phase of the downtown story, will be recapitulated in this section.

Building the Pedestrian Malls: 1964-1974

In the mid-1970s, Roberto Brambilla⁷⁹⁸ and Gianni Longo produced a series of pamphlets called *Footnotes*, which documented the progress of the “traffic free” movement in the United States, Canada, and Europe. With support from the Institute for Environmental Action, HUD, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Columbia University, among others, their work culminated in a 1974 traveling exhibit, “More Streets for People” and later, a handbook geared to practitioners, *For Pedestrians Only*, which was published in 1977. Writing of pedestrian malls in the late 1970s, they said, “They conjure up fantasies of outdoor cafes with parasols, play areas filled with laughing children, bustling shop activities, and an oasis of trees, grass, flowers, and fountains in the middle the urban morass. The reality of the pedestrian mall, however, is quite different, and the reality is what this book is about. Pedestrian malls are not urban idylls created in an artist’s eye, but practical solutions to some urgent problems...A mall can be successful only insofar as it can cope with the problems facing it, which include deteriorating economic and physical situations, a declining quality of life, pollution, congestion, and the flight of the middle class.”⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁸ The Italian architect Roberto Brambilla worked in the Office of Lower Manhattan Development during the Lindsay administration. He was a graduate of Harvard’s Urban Design Program.

⁷⁹⁹ Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo. *For Pedestrians Only: Planning, Design, and Management of Traffic-Free Zones* (New York, NY: Watson-Guptill, 1977), 8.



6.4, 6.5, 6.6

1. Full Mall: Pedestrian Mall, Jackson, MS.
2. Transit Mall: Chestnut Street Transitway, Philadelphia, PA
3. Semi-Mall: Hamilton Mall, Allentown, PA

Credit: *Central City Malls*. Harvey Rubenstein, 1978.

The year 1964 marked an important turning point in American urban policy. With a momentous slate of policy reforms in civil rights, poverty, education, health, and transportation, newly elected President Lyndon Johnson announced the beginning of his Great Society programs. In his speech announcing the Great Society at the University of Michigan in May 1964, Johnson proclaimed that “our society will never be great unless our cities are great” and that “the frontier of imagination and innovation is inside those cities and not beyond their borders.”⁸⁰⁰ Embedded within Johnson’s language, of course, was a tacit recognition that the city itself had become a contested forum whose uncertain fate and dimming prospects had been accentuated by earlier policies and programs. To stave off further decline in public transportation, the Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA) program started in 1964. The Historic Preservation Act passed in 1966. The Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, which started Model Cities, also became law in 1966. Against the backdrop of this ambitious policy agenda, the nation was wracked by race riots in 1967 and 1968. Many occurred in cities like Detroit, Buffalo, Newark, Baltimore, and Cincinnati, which had had the most far-reaching and active urban renewal programs over the previous two decades.⁸⁰¹

In the course of these changes, pedestrianization rested on the cusp between successive urban movements, and from 1964 to 1974, its rhetorical justification and physical design agenda shifted, in select cases, to match these new priorities. Many of the malls built in the mid-to-late 1960s represented a late flowering of projects that were initially inspired by Gruen’s Fort Worth plan. Providence’s Westminster Mall, for instance, constructed in 1965, had emerged from recommendations for the revitalization of the entire city core from 1957 to 1961, including projects on College Hill across the Providence River and an urban renewal complex on nearby Weybosset Hill.⁸⁰² Santa Monica Mall, opened that same year, was based on a 1960 plan by Victor Gruen Associates.⁸⁰³ Sparks Street

⁸⁰⁰ Lyndon B. Johnson, “The Great Society,” Speech delivered at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, May 22, 1964.

⁸⁰¹ In spite of the anger that was often directed towards merchants during the race riots, downtowns, in part because they had limited residential populations, typically bore fewer scars than the neighborhood commercial corridors where growing numbers of black residents confronted entrenched and often hostile immigrant businesses.

⁸⁰² Brambilla et al., *For Pedestrians Only*, 156-161.

⁸⁰³ Pedestrian malls built in this period directly based on early plans by Gruen (not including Fresno or Kalamazoo) include the Santa Monica Mall (plan completed in 1960, built 1965), Honolulu’s Fort Street Mall (plan completed in 1963, built 1969), and Dubuque’s Town Clock Plaza (plan completed in 1965, built 1971). Gruen plans served as the basis for many downtown projects, including malls, mixed-use developments, and “semi-malls” that did not result in full pedestrianization or were eventually redesigned by other firms. Among the pedestrian malls that were initiated by Gruen plans are Boston’s Washington Street mall (1979) and Paterson, New Jersey (redesigned by Beyer, Blinder, Belle, formerly of Gruen, 1974).

Mall in Ottawa dated to the era of the temporary malls, starting in 1959 and hosting six consecutive “summer malls” before a permanent mall was actually designed and built.⁸⁰⁴ Some projects, such as Gruen’s downtown development plan for Dubuque (1965), had started as early as 1959 and were not actually implemented until the early 1970s.

The policy reforms of 1964 opened up new sources of federal funding for pedestrian mall construction and created opportunities for cities that had drafted their original mall plans in the late 1950s and early 1960s to follow through. Of the 90 pedestrian malls included in Harvey Rubenstein’s compendium *Central City Malls* (1978), 47 had received some form of federal funding.⁸⁰⁵ Nicollet Mall, the eight-block transit mall running through Downtown Minneapolis, for example, had been proposed shortly after the formation of the city’s Downtown Council, which sponsored a plan in 1957. Implementation of the Nicollet Mall was paired with a comprehensive pedestrian program for the downtown, including an extensive elevated walkway system that started construction in 1962. By 1965, when the city pursued the implementation of the actual mall, they were able to obtain partial funding through two of the Johnson administration’s new programs, the UMTA demonstration grant program and an Urban Beautification grant.

Malls built in the late 1960s typically fell into one of three types: Full malls, semi-malls, and transit malls.⁸⁰⁶ Enclosed pedestrian malls (differentiated here from downtown malls like Rochester’s Midtown Plaza) were very rare due to the enormous expense of enclosing, air conditioning, and heating an existing street. Only one example, Paterson’s Lower Main Street Mall, was ever implemented in the United States, and the mall was covered rather than fully enclosed. Quebec City’s St. Roche Mall, completed in 1974, was the only fully realized example of this type in North America, though it was a frequently proposed strategy (see WMRT’s plan for Buffalo).⁸⁰⁷ Full malls, like Fresno’s Fulton Mall, typically ran anywhere from two to nine blocks. The longest of this type could run over



6.7, 6.8

4. Full Mall: K Street Pedestrian Mall, Sacramento, CA. Eckbo, Dean and Williams, 1970.

5. Enclosed Mall: St. Roche Mall, Quebec City, QC. 1974.

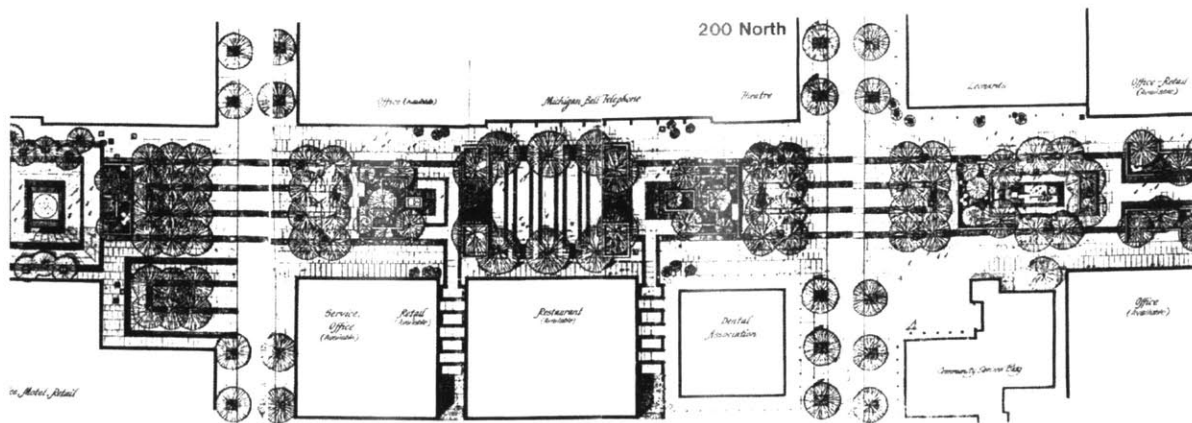
Credit: *For Pedestrians Only: Planning, Design, and Management of Traffic Free Zones*. Roberto Brambilla and Gianni Longo, 1977

804 Brambilla et al., *For Pedestrians Only*, 162-176.

805 Harvey M. Rubenstein. *Central City Malls*. (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), 180-185.

806 Rubenstein, 3-4. It is worth noting that others have proposed a more nuanced typology for pedestrian malls. In “Designing a Mall” (Downtown Malls: An Annual Review, Volume 1. Downtown Research and Development Center, 1975, 37), John Heller proposed ten types, including Temporary; Permanent; Semi-Mall; Full-Mall; Transitway; Spot Mall; Alley and side street mall; Mall with parking; Part-time Mall; and Enclosed Mall.

807 A case study of the St. Roche Mall is included in Brambilla and Longo’s *For Pedestrians Only*, 169-171. According to their case study, despite being the first enclosed mall in North America, the mall suffered from a “lack of street amenities, its crude design, and the artificial environment.” The mall provides a good illustration of the challenges of servicing the enclosed mall and the barriers to coordination in the United States. “Because of service limitations for fire trucks, sprinklers had to be installed at merchant expense in the buildings facing the mall.”



6.9

Washington Square Pedestrian Mall,
Lansing, MI
Designer: Johnson, Johnson, & Roy
Credit: *Central City Malls*. Harvey
Rubenstein, 1977.

3000 feet in total.⁸⁰⁸ Longer malls, which were more common in mid-sized and large cities, often followed a cruciform or cross mall pattern, with small plazas and pedestrian “feeders” coming into the main pedestrian corridor. Miami Beach (1960), Pomona (1963), Fresno (1964), Burbank’s Golden Mall (1967), Honolulu’s Fort Street Mall (1969), Sacramento’s Downtown Mall (1969), Evansville’s Main Street Walkway (1971), Battle Creek’s Michigan Mall (1975), and Memphis’ Mid-America Mall (1976) are all examples of this type.⁸⁰⁹

The vast majority of the malls implemented in the United States, however, were only two to three blocks in length. Many, like the original Kalamazoo project, were little more than permanent retail “gimmicks” built hastily by small cities and towns. Of the 90 cities with pedestrian malls surveyed by Rubenstein, 58 were constructed in cities of less than 100,000 people. Of those 58, cities, 38 had populations under 50,000. Smaller cities, or cities where the pedestrian mall did not prove politically palatable, tended to implement so-called “semi-malls,” which retained a lane for traffic but vastly enlarged the sidewalks and tried to enhance the overall retail environment with the same objectives in mind.⁸¹⁰ The case was similar for transit malls, which proved especially popular in large cities where myriad bus connections along the main street presented a challenge to the potential for pedestrianization.⁸¹¹ Many of the full malls, however, permitted small trams to travel down the corridor, a trend that was patterned after the electric trams used at World’s Fairs and present in some

808 The longest pedestrian malls in the United States were Memphis’ Mid-America Mall, stretching 12 blocks at 4000 feet (Rubenstein, 134-135) and Evansville’s Main Street Walkway (1971) at 7 blocks and 5000 feet. Philadelphia’s Chestnut Street Transitway, Denver’s 16th Street Transit Mall, and Portland’s Transit Mall, however, were much longer than most pedestrian malls.

809 Brambilla and Longo. *For Pedestrians Only*. 174-199.

810 Semi-malls are not considered true pedestrian malls here and are generally seen as a lesser sub-type since they typically required much less regulatory or political effort to implement.

811 Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Brooklyn (Fulton Mall) are examples of this type.

of the earliest plans and installations, including Lincoln Road and Fresno's Fulton Mall.⁸¹²

After Eckbo's Fulton Mall, few pedestrian malls reached the same quality of design sophistication or comprehensive planning. Nonetheless, several malls are notable for their design in this era. Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis, though a transit mall, was characterized by a unique serpentine roadway designed by the landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, who described it as having grown "into the street in a natural way."⁸¹³ In conceiving the Nicollet Mall, Halprin's used his signature design strategy of "motation," scoring notation and motion.⁸¹⁴ Along the undulating path of the roadway, pieces of artwork, street furniture, planting and lighting created a series of notes along which transit and pedestrians paths rhythmically followed. In some cases, too much design could backfire. Sacramento's K Street Mall, completed in 1970 and also designed by Garrett Eckbo, employed a modern design language with a series of water features that drew the ire of local merchants and citizens, who nicknamed the mall "Mayor Christensen's Folly" after Mayor Walter Christensen, who had been the project's primary advocate.⁸¹⁵ Images of pedestrian malls from the era provide evidence of consistent design ideas, many a direct translation of those imagined in downtown plans from the period. Large planters created a datum along the malls. Flush curbs and abstract paving patterns erased the strict delineation between street and sidewalk that pedestrians had grown accustomed to. Many of the malls, especially those designed by Halprin and Eckbo, featured immense abstract water features intended as nodes of public life and assembly. Though often later removed, many malls included kiosks or shelters for shade, which sometimes assumed a sculptural quality or served as a unifying motif for the design (see Tacoma's Broadway Plaza⁸¹⁶). Monumental artworks and follies were staged along the mall as well, though they rarely achieved the level of elaboration or sophistication as in Fresno.

The character of these malls tended to vary considerably. While many fostered a creative interplay between circulatory elements, sculpture, lighting, vegetation, and street furniture, others were sparse and minimal. The Pomona Mall in Pomona, California, which was constructed in 1963



6.10, 6.11

top: Nicollet Mall, 1967, Lawrence Halprin.

bottom: Santa Monica Mall, 1965, Victor Gruen Associates.

812 The pedestrianization of Eugene, Oregon, presents a viable fourth typology, since the city pedestrianized parts or all of multiple streets, creating a polynodal pedestrian mall similar to many of those proposed by Gruen. Eugene's approach reflected European pedestrianization strategies, which tended to provide more of a network of pedestrian spaces, rather than focus on a single long corridor. See Rubenstein, 98-101.

813 Lawrence Halprin quoted in Brambilla et al. *For Pedestrians Only*, 132.

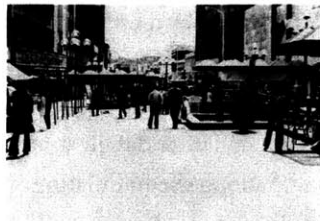
814 Alison Bick Hirsch. *City Choreographer: Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

815 Brambilla et al. *For Pedestrians Only*, 139-140.

816 Rubenstein, 84-87.

6.12

Broadway Plaza, Tacoma, WA
 from Brambilla and Longo's 1976
 compendium *American Urban
 Malls*.



Tacoma's Broadway Plaza is the nucleus of the central business district. Street furniture, fountains, trees, shrubbery and grass create a downtown park for office workers and shoppers alike. Product shows, displays and a farmers' market are often located beneath the several covered areas along the mall, bringing additional activity into the area. Other pedestrian-oriented amenities include playground equipment and a stage for formal concerts and other performances. The mall's primarily modern design incorporates some details of earlier periods, and the buildings along the plaza are a mix of historic and newly built structures, further heightening the eclectic look of the space. An extension of the mall's original four blocks is now being planned.

108

1974, Broadway Plaza
TACOMA WA

City Population 1970: 154,581

	76%	5%
	11%	8%
ON STREET	IN LOTS	IN GARAGES
1,750		4,223
LENGTH	WIDTH	BLOCKS
1,385 feet	80 feet	4
	1 a.m. - 10 a.m.	Any time
STATE	CITY	OTHER
	Ordinance	
TOTAL	CONSTRUCTION	MAINTENANCE
\$1,500,000	Urban Renewal 100%	City: 100%
NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
Gary Sullivan Community Development	5th Floor 909 Broadway Plaza Tacoma, WA 98402	(206) 593-4240

109

and stretched nine long blocks, had little variation or other pedestrian amenities, a factor that some have attributed to its lack of success.⁸¹⁷ Others, such as shorter malls in Jackson, Mississippi and Centralia, Illinois, essentially adapted the grass-on-main street approach to design that had started in Kalamazoo, without much comprehensive planning otherwise. In contrast to the design paradigms that emerged in the mid-1970s and 1980s, best embodied in the movable chairs lauded by William H. Whyte,⁸¹⁸ the pedestrian malls of the late 1960s and early 1970s reflected the architectural language, asymmetrical monumentality, and civic aspirations of an era of modernism already on the wane. Benches and sculptures and fountains stood firmly planted as discrete objects, follies around which designers reluctantly created serpentine paths for emergency vehicle access. As compared to the landscapes of today, the malls were full of stuff, of gestures, of *design*.

Writing in the late 1970s, by the time that the prevailing design paradigm of the mid-1960s pedestrian malls was already passing, Brambilla and Longo gave the following advice, channeling Whyte. "Designers often

817 Brambilla et al, *For Pedestrians Only*, 177.

818 William H. Whyte. *City: Rediscovering its Center*. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1988), 119-123.

Munich was among the first cities to employ movable seating as a design strategy. Also see Brambilla et al., *For Pedestrians Only*, 49.

concentrate on refining the formal architectural components of public spaces without understanding how people use the space and what makes a place successful. Extensive observations of pedestrian areas indicate that it is not the weather, the shops, the urban spaces, or architecture that is the focus of people's attention, but other human beings. Space, building materials, and street furniture are only a frame around the interactions of people. If the frame is good, it helps; if bad, it hampers this activity. Although good design features are important components of a high quality public space, the main consideration should be the generation of high levels of activity.⁸¹⁹

By the early 1970s, as department stores continued to forsake struggling downtowns for the suburbs, that activity was not always easy to produce. Even more difficult to ensure, moreover, was a broad consensus among shop owners downtown that the mall was indeed the solution to their woes. If the fad of the temporary malls had revealed anything, it had been that such a consensus, in spite of widespread press and excitement, would be very challenging to reach. The implementation and success of a mall depended on several critical factors, which are reviewed in Brambilla and Longo's work in detail, as well as in a series of articles on downtown malls published in the *Downtown Idea Exchange*, a publication of the Downtown Research and Development Center led by Laurence Alexander.

Timing proved crucial. In Riverside, California, for instance, the start of construction on the pedestrian mall coincided with the departure of the city's major department store.⁸²⁰ Other cities found that the initial momentum of the pedestrian street could wear off. After an initial boost in revenues, decline set in.⁸²¹ Some malls had been designed and constructed too hastily, without the long-term traffic planning and necessary investments to ensure that they would actually work. This was often the case in smaller cities, where the "grass on main street" approach often drew opposition from merchants used to having their customers park directly in front of their stores.⁸²² A nationwide survey of public attitudes towards pedestrian malls conducted in 1975 revealed (free) parking to be one of the most significant concerns of mall users, in spite of the fact that many cities had already converted large swaths of their downtowns into surface parking lots by the early 1970s.⁸²³ In the same survey, only nine



6.13, 6.14, 6.15

above: River City Mall, Louisville, KY.
middle: Progress Place, Jackson, MI, 1964.

bottom: River City Mall, Louisville, KY, 1973. Johnson, Johnson & Roy.

819 Brambilla et al., *For Pedestrians Only*, 48.

820 Brambilla et al., 19.

821 Ibid., 19. This was acknowledged to be the case in Fresno.

822 Ibid., 17.

823 Phyllis W. Haserot, "Attracting People: Analysis and Interpretation of the Downtown Research and Development Center Survey of Public Attitudes on Downtown Malls," in *Downtown Malls: An Annual Review, Vol. 1*. (New York, NY: Downtown Research and Development Center, 1975).

percent of those sampled expressed a feeling of personal safety within the mall, and only eight percent said that they were attracted to the mall by its sense of activity—or “a sense that something is always happening.”⁸²⁴ While most respondents found pedestrian malls to enhance the overall image of downtown, most came downtown to shop and not much more. Few showed much interest in the public programs, vitality, or excitement that hypothetically differentiated downtown from the suburban malls it was in competition with.

The biggest challenge of the pedestrian mall was coordination. Though councils of downtown businessmen modeled on Mellon’s Allegheny Conference had acted in concert to fund sweeping downtown plans with beautiful renderings and compelling visions in the late 1950s, the ordinary merchants that they had to convince to make these visions feasible lacked the same level of organization or sense of common interest. As Frieden and Sagalyn pointed out in *Downtown, Inc.*, “Everything that was easy to do in the suburbs was harder downtown.”⁸²⁵ Writing about the burst of pedestrian malls constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they wrote. “As an attempt to revitalize downtown shopping, the pedestrian mall flopped. Most lacked ample parking, coordinated shop hours, and careful maintenance shoppers found at suburban malls; worse, the trees, benches, and fountains attracted vagrants and boisterous kids. Pedestrians stayed away, merchants left, and stores remained vacant.”⁸²⁶

The challenge of coordination and the nature of public-ness in the pedestrian malls exacerbated these issues. With the exception of California and Minneapolis, most cities had no explicit legal mechanism for creating downtown malls.⁸²⁷ While many cities found it sufficient to rely upon their legal right to regulate traffic, exercise the police power, or officially “demap” the streets in question, others passed legislation to prevent legal action from opposing merchants.⁸²⁸ In Sacramento, for instance, 80 percent of property owners opposed an assessment district due to the costs anticipated for the mall. City council and the mayor overruled the merchants, but their opposition undermined support for the mall after it opened.⁸²⁹ Pedestrian mall proposals in Battle Creek, Michigan and New York City created friction as well. In Battle Creek, a group opposing the mall brought the issue to a ballot referendum, which after an organized campaign, galvanized supporters to vote in favor of pedestrianization.⁸³⁰ In New York City,

824 Haserot, 35.

825 Frieden et al., 77.

826 Ibid, Ibid.

827 Brambilla et al., *For Pedestrians Only*, 39.

828 Ibid, 39-40.

829 Ibid, 140.

830 Ibid, 31.

Mayor John Lindsay proposed to close parts of five Midtown streets as part of an effort to limit traffic and reduce environmental pollution, one part of a high profile effort to bring the city into conformity with the Clean Air Act of 1970.⁸³¹ The Madison Avenue Mall, the first of Lindsay's proposed street closings, was met with such intense opposition from merchants along the street that they successfully forestalled a planned 90-day test of the mall, which had been proposed by Lindsay and his Office of Midtown Development. Ultimately, the Board of Estimate, which was beyond the mayor's control and had been charged by the court as needing to approve such a plan, voted against the project.⁸³²

Pedestrian Malls 1974-1984

Nixon's moratorium on urban renewal in 1974 did not have the same degree of impact on pedestrian malls as it did on public housing or large-scale urban redevelopment projects like Oklahoma City's CBD Plan. In fact, the environmental movement of the 1970s, which reached its peak with the 1973 oil crisis, catalyzed an anti-automobile campaign that bolstered the case for pedestrian malls. Whereas the rhetoric of the first malls had been built around retail, downtown deterioration, and segregating cars and people into their functionally appropriate zones (the car in free flow, the pedestrian as a relaxed consumer), the pedestrianization of the 1970s was predicated on limiting the "combustion engine-generate hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, particulates, and smog...caused by motor vehicles"⁸³³ and pointed to the success of malls in reducing air pollutants much as the generation prior had cited retail revenues.⁸³⁴ Brambilla, in his "More Streets for People" campaign, reframed the mall as an expression of the humanism advocated by William H. Whyte and Jane Jacobs, a shift not missed by those who reviewed his exhibit in 1974.⁸³⁵ The flexibility of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), coupled with the new Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA) capital grant program, which provided for 80% federal financing, ensured funding streams that could pay for pedestrian malls, if not comprehensive downtown clearance and renewal.

831 Brambilla et al., *Ibid.*

832 *Ibid.*, 122.

833 *Ibid.*, 22.

834 *Ibid.*, 23. Retail revenues, of course, were still touted.

835 Paul Goldberger. "Bryant Park Exhibition Celebrates Idea of Ending Auto's Domination of Streets," *The New York Times*, October 16, 1974.

Wolf Von Eckhardt. "Turning Streets in Outdoor Living Rooms," *The Washington Post*, October 19, 1974.

From Pedestrian Mall to Transit Mall: Denver's 16th Street Transit Mall

After 1974, however, the types of mall projects that cities implemented and the character of those projects gradually changed. The most significant change from 1974-1984 was the shift towards transit malls. The earliest Gruen plans included only token references to transit, typically consisting of a bus terminal connecting to the pedestrianized downtown via an overpass. The primary transit feature in the early projects tended to be the inclusion of electric *pedes-train* systems, which would ensure access for the elderly and immobile to retail locations along the mall. By the early 1960s, plans, including that for Fresno, devoted more consideration to issues of bus routing and mobility, yet these ideas remained secondary to the common highway-intercept-pedestrian mall framework. The passage of the Urban Mass Transit Act changed this, but its effects were not immediately felt, since many of the mall projects finished in the late 1960s and early 1970s reflected the policy objectives and design decisions of five to ten years prior. Federal funding for transit, however, as evidenced in the WMRT downtown plan for Buffalo, drove a typological shift. The Gallery at Market East in Philadelphia, Buffalo's Main Street Mall, and proposals developed in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Portland all presented transit projects that incorporated the features of a pedestrian mall, rather than the other way around.⁸³⁶

Denver's 16th Street Transit Mall is instructive in this regard. The city's efforts to build a downtown mall went back to 1970, when Denver was one of five cities selected to take part in the Center City Transportation Project (CCTP).⁸³⁷ A report generated at that time suggested multiple strategies for downtown, including a people mover, a network of sky bridges, and a pedestrian mall.⁸³⁸ At the same time, Downtown Denver, Inc. and the Denver Planning Office had been exploring the possibility of creating a pedestrian mall downtown, with Minneapolis' Nicollet Mall as a model. In 1973, the city and Downtown Denver hired a consultant, who recommended against a transit mall, citing high bus volumes that would be incompatible with a pedestrian environment. At the same time, however, Denver's Regional Transit District (RTD) had applied to UMTA for funds for a subway running beneath 16th street, the city's main shopping street. After RTD's application was rejected, UMTA provided

836 Several shifted to transit malls based on available UMTA capital demonstration grant funding. New York's unbuilt Broadway Plaza, a late 1970s proposal to turn part of Times Square in front of a new John Portman hotel into a pedestrian mall, was funded in part through UMTA capital and demonstration grants, even though the project represented, in retrospect, an economic development strategy rather than a transit project.

837 Crain and Associates. *Streets for Pedestrians and Transit: Examples of Transit Malls in the United States*. (US Department of Commerce: National Technical Information Service. PB-278 487), 149.

838 Crain and Associates, 149.

funding for a program of bus improvements instead. The city, pursuing a pedestrian mall, had tried (and failed) to pass a special assessment district at the objection of property owners along the street. RTD, the city, and Downtown Denver, recognizing a sudden alignment of objectives and an opportunity to leverage one another's goals and funding, decided to build a shuttle-based transit mall, with plans for the development of a light rail system in the future.⁸³⁹

The impetus for transit mall projects in the mid-1970s included the availability of matching funds for transit, the success of existing prototypes like Nicollet Mall, and the requirements of the Clean Air Act to bring cities into conformity with federal environmental air quality regulations. The 1973 oil crisis, which exacerbated and added newfound urgency to these existing trends, created an altogether favorable environment for funding alternative transportation. The backlash against interstate-era policies further strengthened the case for transit-centered malls that could maintain access while improving the retail environment for pedestrians.⁸⁴⁰

Hybridizing Histories: Last Chance Gulch Mall and Paterson's Lower Main Street

While the emergence of the transit mall represented one important typological shift of the late pedestrian mall era, a second shift, towards historic preservation, reflected changing values and perceptions of downtowns and history more broadly in the United States. In the mid-1950s and 1960s, historic images typically were included in plans to convey blight and provide a counterpoint to proposed modernization. In the narrative of the pedestrian mall, historic preservation played an insignificant role. While iconic landmarks like historic towers and courthouses were often included in the delineations of Carlos Diniz and his contemporaries,⁸⁴¹ these references provided a contrast to the modernization around them and served as a guidepost amidst transformation.⁸⁴² Victor Gruen's sense of history was derivative rather than preservationist in its tendencies. He translated traditional European market squares and agoras into the prevailing language of modern architecture and



6.16, 6.17
Gold Rush kitsch
Last Chance Gulch Mall, Helena
Montana, 1974
Credit: helenahistory.org

839 Crain and Associates, 155.

840 Some projects, like Portland's Transit Mall, emerged out of a transportation agenda as much as an economic development one. Nonetheless, that project, and others like, still provide evidence of how pedestrian malls as a typology graduated shifted towards transit malls, which could be more easily justified and for which funding was more readily obtained.

841 See *Centropolis: The Plan for Central Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, CA: The Los Angeles City Planning Department, 1964), 31. One important exception to this is Carlos Diniz's 1964 rendering of Olvera Street included in the 1964 Plan for Los Angeles, *Centropolis*.

842 It is worth noting that some of these notable landmarks included in the renderings, such as Fresno's Courthouse and Fort Worth's Medical Arts Building, were in fact demolished.

catered his proposals to an age of blight and mobility.⁸⁴³ Even those who cared deeply about preserving history in this era, such as Oklahoma City's Mayor George Shirk, who had inherited the Pei Plan from his predecessors in the mid-1960s,⁸⁴⁴ supported plans for widespread clearance and demolition in the name of progress.⁸⁴⁵

With some notable exceptions, in the early 1970s, very few pedestrian malls explicitly highlighted historic themes. Helena, Montana's Last Chance Gulch Mall, completed in 1974 on a narrow street that dated to the city's Gold Rush era, was pedestrianized as part of \$16 million renewal program focused on reusing the city's historic architecture.⁸⁴⁶ The mall's design, however, reflected a mixed attitude towards history. While the facades of the street were preserved and the modernist follies replaced by gold rush kitsch, lampposts along the mall only superficially adjusted the prevailing modern type and the design remained a hybrid. Paterson, New Jersey's Lower Main Street Mall, designed by Beyer, Blinder, and Belle, three architects who had led Gruen's New York office before setting off on their own in 1969, reflected a similar combination of modernism and historic preservation.⁸⁴⁷ Though only a block long, the mall was the first and only "enclosed" mall in the United States, with a soaring glass ceiling over the entire block. Nevertheless, the project also utilized old gas lamp standards and preserved the historic facades, earning it praise among preservationists for a new approach to downtown.

From Gaslight to Ghirardelli: Precursors to the Festival Marketplace

Gas lamps, in fact, played an important role in the earliest trends in "recycling" old buildings as an urban revitalization strategy. St. Louis' Gaslight Square district, which in 1959 "became the city's premier entertainment destination," preceded festival marketplaces like Faneuil Hall and South Street Seaport by over a decade. According to Alison Isenberg's history of Gaslight Square in *Downtown America*, "St. Louis's massive urban renewal clearance generated the avalanche of building parts that furnished the district's emerging historical ambience," which soon after "became a magnet for tourists and conventioners, for well-heeled middle-

843 Gruen's intercept strategy, based on the walled medieval city, as well as his allusions to the agora and the markets of Europe, all fall into the historical adaptation category discussed here.

844 Lackmeyer et. al, 16.

845 Mayor George Shirk, whose "life revolved around tinkering with an antique car, watching historical epic movies... judging historical photo contexts, and working on a book listing every place name in the history of Oklahoma," (Lackmeyer and Money, 16), is said to have tried to save some of Oklahoma City's historic buildings and artifacts, but nevertheless was a champion of urban renewal for the sake of saving downtown economically. Lackmeyer et al., 19.

846 Brambilla et al. *Fore Pedestrians Only*. 191.

847 Lois Aleosser. "Restoration Can Be Better Than New: Paterson, New Jersey Makes the Case in its Lower Main Street Mall," *Journal of Housing*, 30 (1973):527-33.

aged suburbanites and beatniks.”⁸⁴⁸ With an “approximately Victorian or Gay Nineties aesthetics,” Gaslight Square “created something new, building on the neighborhood’s intriguing yet edgy heritage and warm associations they personally had with cast-off historical artifacts from local demolitions.”⁸⁴⁹

Gaslight even catalyzed rehabilitation in the surrounding neighborhoods, presaging modern gentrification with “suburbanites... abandoning their televisions... renovating old houses and returning to live in the city.”⁸⁵⁰ Yet the initial burst of enthusiasm was gradually undermined as Gaslight’s popularity spurred a second generation of “entrepreneurs [who] employed gimmicky historical themes but abandoned the beatnik, antique-district heritage and the recycling of urban artifacts.”⁸⁵¹ By the mid-1960s, “the unlikely mix of black and white, rich and poor, beat and establishment, tourist and resident had lost its stability.”⁸⁵² After a murder took place at the square in the mid-1960s, its patronage declined. By 1967, Gaslight square was finished and as riots wracked American cities, shopkeepers boarded up their storefronts and left.⁸⁵³

In the 1960s, a number of redevelopment projects followed the model of commercialized nostalgia pioneered by Gaslight Square. In Denver in 1965, the historic 1400 block of Larimer Street, threatened by demolition during urban renewal, was saved by Dana Crawford, a local activist and female pioneer of preservation who later went on to become a redeveloper of historic properties. Underground Atlanta, a five-block area of former basement speakeasies “rediscovered” in the 1960s after street-raising and incremental development had left it almost untouched since the 1920s, also capitalized on its historic legacy. In the early 1960s, Underground Atlanta became an area of nightclubs, jazz joints, and restaurants that evoked the Prohibition era. After peaking in the early 1970s, the area, like Gaslight before it, declined rapidly as crime rose and subway construction removed large swaths of parking. Closed in 1980 and then reopened in 1989 as a historicized shopping mall run by the Rouse Company, including small pushcarts vendors similar to those at Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston, it never matched its initial popularity.

The best known historic redevelopment project from the 1960s was Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco, a collection of former factory buildings redeveloped in 1964 into a waterfront public square with carnival lights, shops, and mixed uses. Saved from demolition in 1962,

848 Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 274-275.

849 Ibid, 277.

850 Ibid, 281.

851 Ibid, Ibid.

852 Ibid, 281.

853 Ibid, 283.

6.18

Gaslight Square, St. Louis, 1961.
Credit: Jim Rackwitz, St. Louis Post-
Dispatch



Ghirardelli Square represented one of the earliest and most successful attempts to grapple with historical re-use in the United States. Unlike the fleeting, informal enterprises of Underground Atlanta or Gaslight Square, the complex was led by a business consortium that “solicit[ed] ideas and proposals from dozens of architects, designers, and experts in leasing and commercial property management.”⁸⁵⁴ Occurring near the peak of urban renewal, the project was well ahead of its time and struggled to find the right mixture of modern expression and historical resonance. Karl Kortum, then director of the Maritime Museum and a staunch preservationist involved in the project, was adamant that the complex be developed with historic sensitivity, while eschewing the overt “world’s fair” nostalgia of places like Gaslight.⁸⁵⁵

Kortum clashed with the landscape architect chosen to carry out the project, Lawrence Halprin, calling his designs “rigid squares and rectangles...tricked out to look like every international airport on earth.”⁸⁵⁶ Halprin and many developers resisted Kortum’s insistence that “history is marketable,”⁸⁵⁷ and struggled with the “old brick factory landscape.”⁸⁵⁸ In spite of resistance, Kortum insisted that the project draw upon and adapt the historical legacy of the site, referencing early 1900s images of a

854 Isenberg, 285.

855 Ibid, 285-286.

856 Ibid, Ibid.

857 Ibid, 286.

858 Ibid, 287.



lushly vegetated landscape of fountains and greenery as an inspiration.⁸⁵⁹ While initial discussions looked at the site model as a quixotic shopping mall, including references to unconventional yet successful types like Los Angeles' Farmer's Market from the 1920s, it was Copenhagen's Tivoli and other European prototypes that provided the most inspiration at Ghirardelli.⁸⁶⁰

6.19

Drawing of Ghirardelli Square, San Francisco by George Albertus for Wurster, Bernardi, Emmons. Credit: *Presentation Drawings by American Architects* (Kemper, 1977)

A Modernism of Ghosts: Tivoli Gardens and Ghirardelli Square

Like Kortum at Ghirardelli Square, Gruen and I.M. Pei had both drawn inspiration from Tivoli Gardens in their plans. Tivoli, in fact, was referred to with almost as much regularity as Rockefeller Center or the Allegheny Conference during the urban renewal era. In an article in *Architectural Forum* from 1959 entitled "Business in the Botanical Garden," Grady Clay had called upon planners to see Tivoli as a model for downtown. "Tivoli," he wrote, "is an outstanding example of what American businessmen and community planners can do to put magnetism into the heart of downtown."⁸⁶¹ While both the Pei Plan and Ghirardelli Square cited Tivoli as one inspiration, the two projects superficially expressed oppositional viewpoints. Moreover, "the proponents of a more historically rooted

859 Isenberg, 290.

860 Ibid, 291, 293.

861 Grady Clay. "Business in a Botanical Garden: 'If every downtown had an attraction like Copenhagen's Tivoli Garden, more people and more dollars would come to rest and play in the city,'" *Architectural Forum*, 111.2 (1959): 108-113.

development theme,” wrote Isenberg, “resisted the imposition of world’s fair flags, carnival excitement, and international ‘hasty’ architecture, as much as they rejected historical recreations or fantasies like Williamsburg and Disneyland.”

Gruen’s plan for Fort Worth, Eckbo’s Fulton Mall, Pei’s Tivoli Gardens, and Ghirardelli Square⁸⁶² stemmed from the common impulse to create downtowns that expressed conviviality and modernity through an entourage and ensemble that could forestall the exodus of the middle class whites from the nation’s cities. Water features, sculptural pavilions, and even odd historic landmarks nestled among modernized storefronts restaged downtown as a playground for shopping and an insulated environment that could match the safe and seamless suburban shopping mall then sprouting at the periphery. Though the historic argument of these projects shifted over time, with confused and often overlapping combinations of “modern” and “postmodern” formulations, their underlying purpose and ideals transcended their stylistic differences.

Marshall Berman wrote that what “distinguishes modernism from sentimentalism” is not a desire to “blend or merge” with the past, but rather a desire to “‘bring it all back’ into the past...to bring to bear on their past selves they have become in the present, to bring into those old homes visions and values that may clash radically with them—and maybe to re-enact the very tragic struggles that drove them from their homes in the first place.”⁸⁶³ Taking Berman a step further, Ghirardelli Square’s legacy may be interpreted as a thoroughly modern one. In aligning historic architecture with the domain of capital, the project’s developers brought their own modernity to bear upon the past, in turn “re-enacting its tragic struggles” for profit. Where Gruen modernized the medieval marketplace, drawing upon, but not imitating, his native Vienna, those projects that would follow in Ghirardelli’s footsteps in the 1970s would grasp at “a past in the process of disintegration;”⁸⁶⁴ a past that was, as Berman states, “baseless and elusive.” “The modernist[s] of the 1970s,” he says, “would ‘look back for something solid to lean on, only to find [them]selves embracing ghosts. The modernism of the 1970s was a modernism of ghosts.”⁸⁶⁵

Few embodied a “modernism of ghosts” as much as the developer James Rouse and the architect Benjamin Thompson, who together helped redefine downtown development’s interaction with the past through the Festival Marketplace in the 1970s. Both Thompson and Rouse had careers

862 Other notable early historical “recycling” projects included River Quay in Kansas City, Laclede’s Landing in St. Louis, Trolley Square in Salt Lake City, and Old Market in Omaha.

863 Berman, *All that is Sold Melts into Air*, 333.

864 Berman, *Ibid.*

865 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

that closely followed the arch of modernism; Thompson as a partner at The Architects Collaborative and a protégé of Walter Gropius; Rouse as a mortgage-banker turned-shopping mall developer who spearheaded the development of the New Towns program in the late 1960s the early 1970s. In retrospect, they were unlikely candidates to bring themselves to bear on the past. Nonetheless, their championing of the festival marketplace demonstrates both how seemingly postmodern urban ideals transitioned out of modernism as well as how modernism embraced certain ideals (like Tivoli) that complicated its functionalist posture.

James Rouse: The Zelig of Modernism

Berman discusses the third phase of metamorphosis in the Faustian tragedy of development as that of the developer himself. “[T]he developer, as Goethe conceives him, is tragic as well as heroic. In order to understand the developer’s tragedy, we must judge his vision of the world not only by what it sees—by the immense new horizons it opens up for mankind—but also by what it does not see: what human realities it refuses to look at, what potentialities, it cannot bear to face. Faust envisions, and strives to create, a world where personal growth and social progress can be had without significant human costs. Ironically, his tragedy will stem precisely from his desire to eliminate tragedy from life.”⁸⁶⁶ In the narrative of the American city, Berman might well have described James Rouse, the pioneering mortgage banker, shopper mall developer, and eventual champion of the festival marketplace. Rouse touched upon and influenced every stage of this story and represented the underlying themes and contradictions of American life and American capital in the saga of downtown planning and development.

James Rouse grew up in the small town of Easton, Maryland. By the age of 16, he had lost both of his parents and saw his childhood home foreclosed upon just as the Depression was settling in. Yet he overcame the tumult of his early life to obtain a college education and eventually a law degree, and in 1935, joined the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) as an assistant legal clerk in the State Director’s Office.⁸⁶⁷ In his time with the FHA at the beginning of the New Deal, Rouse gained a familiarity with “buildings...and business,”⁸⁶⁸ while identifying a position for himself as a “servicing agent” who could “deal with the details of insured mortgages or comply with all of the government regulations.”⁸⁶⁹

866 Berman, 66.

867 Joshua Olsen. *Better Places, Better Lives: A Biography of James Rouse* (Washington, DC: The Urban Land Institute, 2003), 12.

868 Olsen, 13.

869 Ibid, Ibid.

With his insider knowledge of the FHA, Rouse proposed to the Title Guarantee and Trust Company, whom he dealt with regularly, that he fill an entrepreneurial niche for them, handling the company's FHA-backed residential mortgages in urban areas. Based on his own recommendation, Rouse was hired to build a mortgage-banking department for the company.⁸⁷⁰ After establishing and then leading that department, in 1939, Rouse and Hunter Moss, a fellow mortgage banker from a wealthy Baltimore family, partnered to create their own firm, the Moss-Rouse Company. Moss-Rouse focused primarily on the residential mortgage market and the burgeoning suburban market, playing the role of middlemen between the FHA and lenders, which included many of the nation's large insurance companies. "The FHA program was successful because mortgage bankers were recommending it to lenders and the mortgage bankers were becoming an increasingly powerful force in city shaping as a result of the FHA's willingness to insure loans for homebuyers."⁸⁷¹ While Rouse's venture in the FHA-guaranteed loan market had made him an influential figure in America's evolving urban landscape by the 1940s, his business remained embedded in the large scale decentralization process that was changing cities and regions during the Depression and World War II, and which FHA-backed mortgages fueled at the expense of cities and the urban poor.⁸⁷²

The Baltimore Plan and the Housing Act of 1954

After the war, the scope of mortgage banking and Rouse's efforts continued to evolve. He joined Baltimore's Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA), an organization that drafted the "Baltimore Plan of Housing Law Enforcement."⁸⁷³ The Baltimore Plan, as it became known, "was a straightforward approach to urban deterioration: 'The city would enforce, to the letter, all the housing laws that were on the books, and in that way compel the owners of slum properties to vacate them or rehabilitate them to minimum legal standards.'"⁸⁷⁴ In contrast to the provisions of the 1949 Housing Act, which Rouse vehemently opposed on the grounds that [it] "segregate[d] people into lower-income groups and advertise[d] their less privileged economic condition,"⁸⁷⁵ the Baltimore Plan focused on neighborhood rehabilitation and stabilization, attacking

870 Olsen, 14.
871 Ibid, 21.
872 Ibid, 20-21.
873 Ibid, 32.
874 Ibid, Ibid.
875 Ibid, 31.

“the causes of slums and prevent[ing] their spread into new areas.”⁸⁷⁶ From the perspective of some housing reformers at the time, the Baltimore Plan was viewed “as part of a strategy to kill funding for more generous housing schemes.”⁸⁷⁷

Based on his involvement and leadership in the Baltimore Plan, Rouse, who was by then an established leader in neighborhood housing advocacy and mortgage banking, was invited to by President Eisenhower to participate on his Advisory Committee on Housing Programs and Policies as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation, Rehabilitation, and Redevelopment. Rouse’s activities in housing reform under the Eisenhower Administration brought him into contact with urban policy leaders including Miles Colean, a fellow member of the committee, whose had used the term “urban renewal” in his book *Renewing Our Cities*.⁸⁷⁸ Rouse became a proponent and popularizer of the term,⁸⁷⁹ and in the anti-socialist milieu of the Eisenhower Administration helped to author new housing legislation that “carefully limited public housing to meet the basic needs of redevelopment.”⁸⁸⁰ The most important shift in the Housing Act of 1954, however, was that it shifted the focus from housing towards “redevelopment,” a move that many perceived to be a careful “calculation by business interests of necessary costs to their private sector rebuilding of city centers.”⁸⁸¹

As the Moss-Rouse Company matured, Rouse founded an internal division at the company known as the Metropolitan Research and Development Division, which began to explore real estate and mortgage business beyond the residential portfolio that had been the company’s early focus. After parting ways with Moss in 1954,⁸⁸² Rouse established the James W. Rouse Company and then spun off a corporation in 1956 known as Community Research and Development (CRD). In the early 1950s, Rouse’s business ventures took him into the then-burgeoning field of shopping centers. At that time, Rouse had a relatively limited knowledge of real estate. Though his company had assembled financing for 26 shopping centers, the “mortgage banker had no power over the location, design, or even type of project”⁸⁸³ and Rouse had never initiated his own project and seen it through “from market study to built reality.”⁸⁸⁴

876 Nicholas Dagen Bloom. *Merchant of Illusion: America’s Salesman of the Businessman’s Utopia*. (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2004.), 68.

877 Bloom, 69.

878 Miles Lanier Colean. *Renewing Our Cities* (New York, NY: Twentieth Century Fund, 1953).

879 Bloom, 72.

880 Ibid, 75.

881 Ibid, 75.

882 For a description of the Moss-Rouse split, see Olsen, 48-49.

883 Olsen, 53.

884 Ibid, 54.



6.20

Film stills from “The Baltimore Plan,” promotional film, 1953. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Regional Shopping Centers: Mondawmin and Cherry Hill

Since 1949, however, Rouse had had his eyes on a former horse farm in Baltimore known as Mondawmin, a 46-acre walled pasture only three miles from downtown, which he believed was an ideal site for a regional shopping center. After acquiring the property, Rouse brought the architect Pietro Belluschi, economist Kenneth Welch, landscape architect Daniel Kiley, land use planner Seward Mott, and traffic planner Wilbur Smith onto his “board of design” for the project.⁸⁸⁵ When Rouse and his team began pursuing the project in 1953, regional shopping centers were in their infancy. Their financing, tenant structure, and design remained a test bed of evolving ideas with little to back them up.⁸⁸⁶ Convincing lenders that shopping malls were sure to make a big profit was tenuous. However, James Rouse, with his widespread connections to insurance companies and financial institutions, could shepherd this type of project to completion. In Rouse’s case, he was able to obtain a mortgage from Connecticut General Life Insurance and Brown Brothers, Harriman & Company.⁸⁸⁷ Mondawmin, his first foray into shopping center development, opened in 1956, garnering praise among critics and architectural journals. Rouse received personal credit for the undertaking, even being named by *Time* magazine as the “No. 1 shopping-center financial consultant” and by Harper’s as the “Lorenzo de Medici of shopping centers.”⁸⁸⁸ In 1958, two years after Gruen’s Southdale Center opened in Edina, Minneapolis, Rouse built his own enclosed mall, the Harundale Mall in Glen Burnie, Maryland.⁸⁸⁹

Rouse and Community Research and Development went on to build shopping centers in San Antonio and Charlotte in the late 1950s, but their most prominent project came after the firm was engaged by Strawbridge & Clothier of Philadelphia to develop Cherry Hill Mall in Delaware Township, New Jersey. For Cherry Hill, Rouse hired Victor Gruen (“the master”) to coordinate the planning and design of the center. In Gruen, Rouse found “a man not unlike himself in personality and thought” and both were “dynamic men in their fields, developing new ideas and pursuing them tenaciously.”⁸⁹⁰ The center, which opened in 1961, featured 120 skylights along two malls with 14,000 trees, flowers,

885 Olsen, 54.

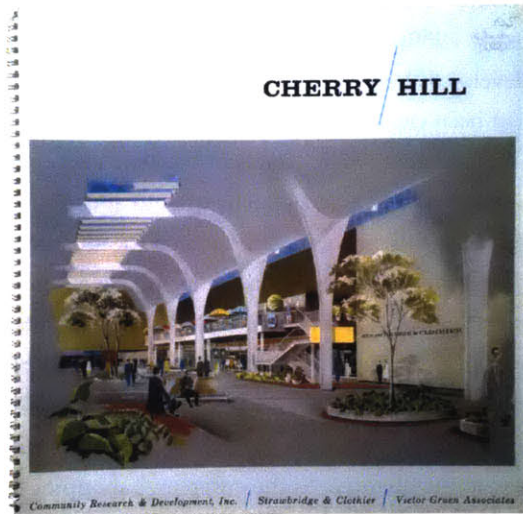
886 See Frieden et al., *Downtown Inc.* 61-71.

887 Olsen, 56-57.

888 *Ibid.*, 62.

889 Gruen felt that Rouse’s work at Harundale had been subpar and that the design was “atrocious.” See Olsen, 100.

890 Olsen, 101.



and shrubs, which Rouse insisted upon.⁸⁹¹ In between the anchor tenants, was “a group of small specialty kiosks selling international goods...which included booths specializing in goods from Mexico, Italy, the Balkans, India, and the Far East,...dubbed the ‘International Bazaar,’”⁸⁹² a concept that was derived from Rouse’s “fascination with small, independent merchants.”⁸⁹³

The success of Cherry Hill, and the acclaim that the project drew from both architectural critics and developers, was so great that Delaware Township legally changed its name to Cherry Hill. The name change marked an important cultural moment in America. It cemented the fact that public life had gradually shifted from traditional downtowns into private regional centers serving suburban consumers. Rouse, like Gruen, never acknowledged the inherent conflict of developing in both the suburbs and the inner city. He “saw the efforts as integrally linked... and he...failed to grasp any contradiction between his involvement with the development of malls and his role as a leading spokesman for urban renewal.”⁸⁹⁴

Downtowns and New Towns

As Rouse emerged as one of the nation’s leading shopping mall developers, he simultaneously became involved with downtown retailing projects

6.21, 6.22

Cherry Hill. Community Research & Development, Strawbridge & Clothier, and Victor Gruen Associates, 1961.

Credit: Crawford Westbrook Collection, MIT Libraries

891 Olsen, 103.

892 Ibid, 104.

893 Ibid, Ibid.

894 Ibid, 111.

around the country. He played a pivotal role in the development of Baltimore's Charles Center and later, in the city's Inner Harbor redevelopment. In the early 1960s, he became involved in a second project with Victor Gruen to develop a shopping center in downtown Norfolk, Virginia on land that had been cleared for urban renewal in the central business district.⁸⁹⁵ Yet the prevailing retail trends of the time challenged the project and Rouse could not find a department store to anchor Norfolk's downtown mall. Gruen and Rouse also worked together on a second downtown project, for the Main Street of Paterson, New Jersey, in the early 1960s. The Paterson project, part of the city P.L.A.N. (Paterson Looks Ahead Now) initiative, was never realized, though a mall was built in a much diminished form on one block of Main Street in the mid-1970s.⁸⁹⁶

After Cherry Hill, CRD would cement itself as one of the leading shopping mall developers in the country. As the company's shopping mall portfolio matured, Rouse in the mid-to-late 1960s shifted his focus towards building new communities, including the villages of Roland Park and Cross Keys, and the New Town of Columbia, Maryland. In one revealing anecdote from one of the Work Group⁸⁹⁷ sessions he had organized to infuse the new town program with interdisciplinary expertise and sociological perspectives, Herbert Gans, the University of Pennsylvania sociologist and author of *The Urban Villagers* (1962), confronted Rouse. "Americans living in a new town, like Americans living everywhere else," he said, "would be narrowly focused on themselves, their families, and not much else,"⁸⁹⁸ suggested Gans. "What about the drunkards and prostitutes? Would there be a place for them and their comrades—a skid row section of the shining city?"⁸⁹⁹ According Rouse's biographer, Rouse chafed at Gans' critique for "it was the future that was always rose-colored. He believed change for the better was possible, and that it could be brought about through inspired efforts."⁹⁰⁰

Perhaps it is not surprising that both James Rouse and Victor Gruen, two men whose chaotic early lives impelled them to always look forward with optimism, loved Disney. "Some may reject the whole thing as a stage set: false, flimsy," Rouse once wrote. "But it seemed to me an authentic fairyland that made joy, caprice—yes, and beauty, real beauty, out of such widely diverse subjects as fairy tales, aerospace, submarine rides,

895 Olsen, 112.

896 Ibid, 112.

897 The "Non-physical Planning Work Group" was created in 1963 to assemble an interdisciplinary body of experts who could advise Rouse and his team on the "vaguer aspects of the process," and included sociologists, political scientists, and education experts that could enrich the more traditional planning apparatus. See Olsen, 152.

898 Olsen, 162.

899 Ibid, 161.

900 Ibid, 162.



6.23

Faneuil Hall, 1950s

Photograph by Nishan Bichajian

Kevin Lynch and Gyorgy Kepes

Courtesy of MIT Libraries

haunted houses, monorails, the tropics, and early America.”⁹⁰¹ Rouse and Disney had met several times to discuss their new town ventures, Rouse at Columbia, Maryland and elsewhere, and Disney with his Experimental Planned Community of Tomorrow (EPCOT). Both were Faustian tragic heroes of the modern age, who, along with Gruen, believed not in the unembellished modernity of Corbusier or even I.M. Pei, but in a festival modernism that delighted in the twin fantasies of people and profit.

Winning Faneuil Hall

In 1972, as Columbia New Town struggled to remain fiscally healthy, the developer Robert E. Simon sent James Rouse a letter informing him of a project that had been proposed to him by the architect Benjamin Thompson. Thompson, the former chair of Architecture at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, a founding member of The Architects Collaborative (TAC), and the founder of a modern furnishings store called Design Research, wanted to restore the old buildings of Boston’s Quincy Market around Faneuil Hall as a retail center.⁹⁰² Official plans by the Boston City Planning Board had called for the market’s demolition in 1956.⁹⁰³ In 1959, however, the Cambridge firm Adams, Howard, and Greely, working with Kevin Lynch of MIT’s Department of City Planning, advised the city to restore the buildings as a marketplace rather than demolish them.⁹⁰⁴ In the early 1960s, the director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, Edward Logue secured the preservation of the market buildings as part of the city’s official downtown waterfront renewal plan, preventing their demolition.

901 Olsen, 240.

902 Ibid, Ibid.

903 Frieden et al., *Downtown Inc.*, 107.

904 Frieden et. al. 107.



6.24

Faneuil Hall Market Restoration, 1972. Stahl Associates, Architect
Roger Webb, Architectural Heritage, Inc.

Credit: *Presentation Drawings by American Architects* (Kemper, 1977)

Roger Webb's proposal for Faneuil Hall would have kept it as a public market, much like Pike Place Market in Seattle, though his proposal ultimately lost out to Rouse and Thompson's marketplace.

Benjamin Thompson had traveled widely as part of his business leading Design Research. He had witnessed the success of Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco and found inspiration in Los Angeles's Farmer's Market,⁹⁰⁵ Copenhagen's Tivoli, and bazaars and squares across Europe and

⁹⁰⁵ Farmer's Market in Los Angeles marked an important predecessor to the Festival Marketplace. The brainchild of Roger Dahlhjelm, a real estate entrepreneur and businessman, the market opened in 1934 on a site on Wilshire Boulevard between Beverly Hills and Hollywood. The market had a collection of booths (eighteen to start) offering a wide variety of goods and trinkets set in an open field with plenty of parking. With its "bazaar-like atmosphere," the market attracted "an affluent trade of movie stars and others who sought the unusual goods sold there" (Longstreth, 283). The market had an unconventional setting, set back from the road in a massive parking area with few visual cues or direct orientation to the street. "The basic idea of internalized pedestrian traffic surrounded by circumferential parking was a complete departure from convention," says Longstreth (285). The idea was copied regionally, including a similar farmer's market outside of Fresno, California.

Another important precedent in Los Angeles to Faneuil Hall was Olvera Street. The project, which pedestrianized and preserved one block of a largely Hispanic market area south of LA's old plaza, was led by "an ardent and socially well-placed Hispanophile" named Christine Sterling in the late 1920s (Longstreth, 298). Sterling worked with city officials to close Olvera Street to traffic and recreate the "atmosphere of a traditional Hispanic marketplace as well as to provide an outlet for Hispanic artisans and merchants" (Longstreth, 279). The market "verged on being a Hollywood interpretation of a street market. Merchants were under strict control of Sterling's corporation. The crafts, novelty items, food, and entertainment purveyed were oriented toward the Anglo population" (Longstreth, 280).



6.25

Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen,
1952.

Credit: Richard Langendorf
Collection, Massachusetts
Institute of Technology.

the Middle East. In a proposal with the developers Van Arkel and Moss, Thompson had suggested that the city reconstruct the central Quincy Market building as a “food arcade,”⁹⁰⁶ with the adjoining buildings for retail, hotel, offices, and/or apartments. Despite his strong proposal, Van Arkel and Moss proved incapable of meeting the BRA’s deadlines and requirements, and Thompson sought out a more seasoned developer for the project. As in his earlier partnership with Gruen, Rouse immediately took to Thompson and, enthused by the challenge of recycling the old market buildings, agreed to develop the project.⁹⁰⁷ By the early 1970s, Rouse “was at his nadir as a developer. Columbia was failing, and it was uncertain whether it would be rescued from its creditors. Every month more pink slips were enclosed with Rouse Company paychecks. The stock price was at an all-time low... Yet even as his world collapsed around him, Rouse was dealing himself in again—fighting for a new project that he, and at times he alone, thought would pay off big.”⁹⁰⁸

Though almost ten years after the development of Ghirardelli Square, the redevelopment of Faneuil Hall remained an unprecedented and unusual project, whose inherent structure challenged Rouse’s staff familiar with the development of shopping malls. The project had no

906 Frieden et al., 109.

907 While Thompson had been influential in convincing the Mayor and the redevelopment authority on his plans, the city initially wanted to give the project to a prominent Boston developer named Roger Webb, whose firm Architectural Heritage Inc. had local experience in historic preservation, including a recent restoration of Boston’s old city hall. Roger Webb’s proposal did not call for retail space or food vendors, which represented the crux of the Rouse-Thompson proposal, but would have kept open a public market. After conferring with several external advisers and experts, as well after significant lobbying by Rouse himself, Mayor Kevin White opted to go with Rouse and Thompson instead. (Frieden and Sagalyn, 110).

908 Olsen, 245.

anchor department store, no proof of the “marketability” of historic facades and buildings, and few projects to look at as a formula for success. That small vendors and food markets would be the main attraction challenged everything that the Rouse Company had learned about development. Convincing his staff was one thing; convincing the banks was another. Though Rouse received support from some of his traditional backers, most lenders refused to touch the project. Rouse’s peer, the developer Edward DeBartolo had gone so far as to declare in 1973, “I would put a penny downtown. It’s bad. Face it, why should people come in? They don’t want the hassle, they don’t want the danger...No individual or corporate set-up can make a dent on those problems. So what do you do? Exactly what I’m doing, stay out in the country, that is the new downtown.”⁹⁰⁹

Towards a Preservation Ethic

DeBartolo’s skepticism, however, turned into an opportunity for Rouse and Thompson to carve a niche for themselves in the emerging post-urban landscape. After the significant protests that followed the demolition of Pennsylvania Station in New York City in 1963 and the demise of significant landmarks and historic neighborhoods nationwide, Lyndon Johnson signed the Historic Preservation Act into law in 1966. The impetus for historic preservation came in part as a reaction to the widespread destruction wrought by the federal highway program and urban renewal, but equally as a result of neglect by property owners, the perverse lending policies that undermined historic areas, and the proliferation of surface parking lots at the expense of the urban fabric.⁹¹⁰ In his essay “Our Lost Inheritance,” included in the seminal 1965 compilation *With Heritage So Rich*, the architect and urban planner Carl Feiss, who had himself worked for Urban Renewal Administration, recounted, “those buildings which are gone but not forgotten are legion. Those portions of older cities, waterfronts, fine residential areas, handsome early office buildings, old mills, great churches and all the other storied places of our past that now form a roster of our architectural dead, form a formidable and heart-breaking list, too long to be recounted.”⁹¹¹

The preservation of significant historic landmarks was neither a new or unprecedented phenomenon in the mid-1960s. Preservation activities had been ongoing since the mid-nineteenth century, when the conservation of natural beauty became an increasing concern and was

909 Olsen, 248-249.

910 Carl Feiss, “Our Lost Inheritance,” in United States Conference of Mayors. Special Committee on Historic Preservation, and National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States. *With Heritage So Rich*. (Washington DC: Preservation Press, 1999), 117.

911 Carl Feiss, “Our Lost Inheritance,” 118.

enthusiastically taken up as a cause by several presidents, most notably Theodore Roosevelt with the creation of the U.S. Forest Service and the establishment of the national parks. Roosevelt also signed into law the United State Antiquities Act of 1906, which gave the President the power to declare national monuments on public lands. Many historic monuments preserved at this time tended to be associated with Presidents themselves, such as the preservation of a Presidential home, or sites of military or archaeological significance, such as the Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine. In 1936, the Historic Sites Act enabled the federal government to preserve individual sites, buildings, and objects, regardless of whether or not they were on federal lands. President Truman signed a bill in 1949 establishing the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which created a clearinghouse for information, donations, and activities related to historic sites and “facilitate[d] public participation in the preservation of sites, buildings, and objects of national significance.”⁹¹² That act, however, did not create a program for federal assistance or grant making to support their preservation.⁹¹³ At that time, the tendency was to create “little paradises of nostalgia in an ocean of superhighways and loudspeakers, billboards, neon signs, parking lots, used car dumps, and hot-dog stands.”⁹¹⁴ Historic villages like Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts sought to create a “dream image of an immutable past,”⁹¹⁵ affirming the degree of difference between these walled illusions and the outside world, just as shopping malls were re-enacting the life the downtown for a population increasingly wedded to the automobile. The tendency towards fakery, towards façade and flourish, undermined the objectives of preservation as something spurious and superficial in its earliest incarnations.

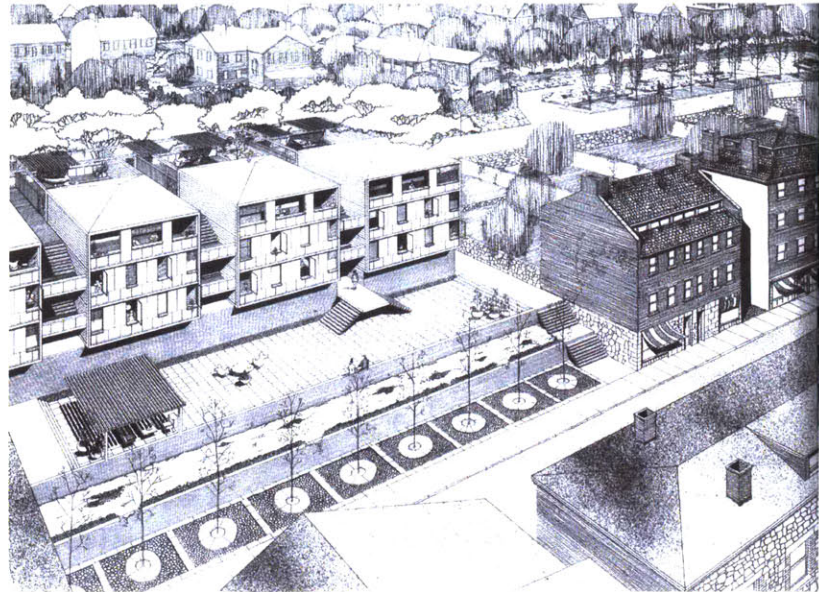
Despite the tendency towards theater and façade, some efforts led toward real public policy change. In 1931, Charleston, South Carolina became the first city to create a neighborhood level preservation program and in the early 1940s, with support from the Carnegie Foundation, undertook a detailed survey of its historic structures, contained in the 1944 report *This is Charleston*. St. Louis, Chicago, and Boston were among other cities that began to take stock of their historic properties through detailed local surveys.

912 Lawson B. Knott. “The Impact of Historic Preservation on Development and Land Use,” *Urban Land*, 34:7 (1975): 4.

913 United States Conference of Mayors. Special Committee on Historic Preservation, and National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States. *With Heritage So Rich*, (Washington DC: Preservation Press, 1999), 153.

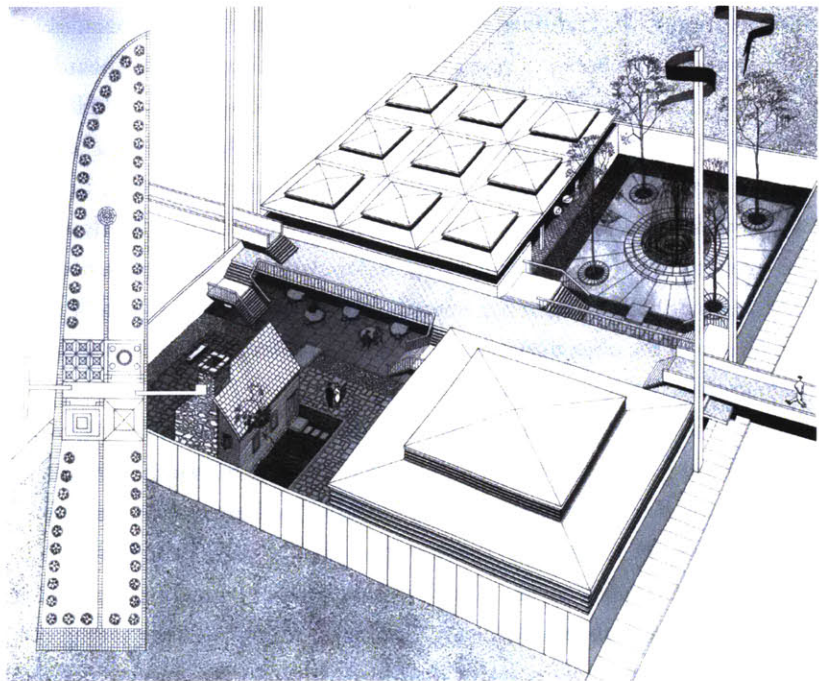
914 *With Heritage So Rich*, 159.

915 *Ibid*, 155.



6.26, 6.27, 6.28

College Hill: a Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal, Providence, RI. The Providence City Plan Commission, the Providence Preservation Society, and the Housing and Home Finance Agency, 1959. Courtesy of MIT Libraries



Providence and the College Hill Plan

In the late 1950s, the Urban Renewal Administration partnered with the Providence Preservation Society and City Planning Commission on a renewal study for the historic College Hill area of Providence. The project served as a “demonstration of how rehabilitation and renewal can be accomplished in historic urban areas” through careful study and inventory of the area’s historic structures. The goal was not to make “a modern dream of the past concrete,” but to, as stated in the report’s introduction, “restore and preserve their historic architecture, safeguard and renew their residential neighborhoods, check encroaching blight, chart future growth, build needed modern housing, make good use of waste land, ease traffic and parking situations and create needed parks and playgrounds.”⁹¹⁶ The College Hill plan, published in 1959, marked an important stepping-stone⁹¹⁷ in the lineage of preservation as well as a critical exhibition of how cities could be both preserved and renewed.⁹¹⁸ The Plan emphasized that its purpose was not to create a museum of historic buildings, but to encourage their re-use for practical functions.⁹¹⁹ With this in mind, a detailed evaluation of existing ordinances, legal structures, and historic commissions then existing in the United States was made. Historic commissions, such as New Orleans’s Vieux Carré Commission, the Georgetown Historic District in Washington D.C., and the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission in Boston, provided the most salient form of governmental control for historic districts, yet the impact and power of these groups remained far outweighed by the urban renewal legislation and the prevailing rhetoric of slum clearance in the 1950s.⁹²⁰

In contrast to the typical neighborhood plans published at the time, the *College Hill* plan provided an exhaustive historical survey of the area’s physical layout and architectural landmarks. Detailed floor plans of historic structures, catalogues showing period styles, and photographs of notable structures that might otherwise be reserved for the obligatory images of “blight” here provided a basic framework for reading the city as a layered artifact. The plan applied the basic, data driven rational planning

916 *College Hill: a Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal* (Providence, RI: The Providence City Plan Commission, the Providence Preservation Society, and the Housing and Home Finance Agency, 1959), v.

917 In the late 1950s, buoyed by Truman’s legislation creating the National Trust, an increasing number of studies and inventories were carried out to catalogue the historic buildings in older cities and towns.

918 This statement does not mean to present a comparison between the Baltimore Plan, which focused on neighborhood rehabilitation from the perspective that the federal government should not be in the business of clearance for public housing, and preservation, which emanated from the concern of individuals who saw merit in the rehabilitation of structures for the sake of retaining important physical artifacts of history.

919 *College Hill*, 3-4.

920 *Ibid.*, 5-7.

techniques of urban renewal to the evaluation of historic structures, using scoring and mapping systems typically used to assess structural deficiencies to the task of cataloguing historic merit.⁹²¹ Whereas later historic surveys would resolve into programs for the restoration of main street facades and strict architectural controls, *College Hill* presented an approach that melded the value of historic architecture with the imperative for modern expression and reconstruction. Like Gordon Cullen's sketches for *The Architectural Review*, the plan embraced the city as a dynamic field capable of expressing multiple periods and vantage points simultaneously. In short, it sought to both "develop techniques for integrating areas of historic architecture into proposed redevelopment programs" as well as to "demonstrate visually how contemporary architecture can successfully relate to existing historic architecture."⁹²²

While it streamlined the celebrated clutter of Cullen's cityscape, *College Hill* offered a remarkable synthesis of modern architecture and historic preservation whose vision had few parallels at that time. One rendering in the plan showed a man in the foreground taking a photograph of a woman walking down a street of row houses, which had a mixture of modern additions and historic structures.⁹²³ More than any other from that era, the plan sought and articulated an active compromise in the cityscape that recognized both the impulse to preserve as well as to renew. The plan was well received, receiving a citation from the American Institute of Architects in 1960 and coverage in the major architectural journals of the time.⁹²⁴ *College Hill* was designated as a national historic district in 1970, three years after the plan was re-issued in 1967. In that re-issue, planners presented some of the significant renewal projects and restorations accomplished in the last eight years, including photographs of both restored historic homes alongside new laboratories and dormitories from nearby Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design, several of which had been built at the expense of historic structures.

The Historic Preservation Act of 1966

While the *College Hill* Plan provided a vision for how urban renewal and historic preservation could complement one another, it, like Ghirardelli Square, remained an anomaly rather than turning point in the 1960s. Federal legislation, coming with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, helped to catalyze the shift towards historic preservation by establishing a federal interest in fostering and accelerating

921 Ibid, 92.

922 *College Hill*, v.

923 Ibid, 145-46.

924 Ibid, 216.

it.⁹²⁵ The Act provided means for the National Park Service to provide matching grants-in-aid to state and local governments, establishing a direct financial assistance program for preservation. Following its passage, the federal government established a review process for impacts to sites on the National Register of Historic Places (it was later amended to include eligible sites as well), worked with the Department of Transportation to consider effects to historic areas and landmarks, and after the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), expanded the horizons for ensuring that government or private action would not further despoil the country's heritage landscapes.

Federal action in historic preservation created a legal climate in which the destruction of national monuments and historic neighborhoods could be more readily questioned and eventually gave birth to legal mechanisms like transfer of development rights (TDR), which had preserved Grand Central Station in New York City through the transfer of its developable air rights. While the bulk of the efforts around historic preservation to date had been led by private initiative, including preservation societies, interest groups, and foundations, few examples had aligned historic preservation with the economics of retail or the private market. Prior to Faneuil Hall, private sector historic preservation was rare. After Ghirardelli Square in 1964, a small list of projects was consistently referenced. These included Trolley Square in Salt Lake City, an old streetcar barn that had been refashioned in 1971 as a collection of 80 shops, including art galleries, restaurants, and banks; Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market in Seattle; Larimer Square in Denver; and Underground Atlanta, the latter two of which were previously discussed. In July 1975, citing "widespread interest among developers, bankers, and others in getting at the facts and figures which lead to an inviting bottom line for investors," the Urban Land Institute co-hosted a national conference on the "Economics of Historic Preservation," with the National Trust for Historic Preservation near Seattle's Pioneer Square redevelopment."⁹²⁶

Pike Place Market and the Public Authority Model

With Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square, Seattle had proven itself a leader in the nascent historic preservation movement. In the 1940s, Pike Place Market was devastated by the loss of the Japanese farmers who made up much of the market's proprietors and clientele to World War II internment camps.⁹²⁷ In the wake of market's deterioration, plans were

925 Knott, 5.

926 Knott, 7.

927 Frieden et al., 115.

6.29

Friends of the Market protest to save the Pike Place Market from demolition, February 1971.



drawn in the early 1960s for a mixed-use development called Pike Plaza, which would have demolished the structure and replaced it with a hotel, apartment buildings, and a parking garage. A group named “Friends of the Market,” which was led by an architecture professor at the University of Washington named Victor Steinbrueck, formed to prevent demolition. In 1971, a ballot measure won the support of 60% of voters to save the market and created a 7-acre historic district in the area. As Frieden and Sagalyn have pointed out, “the decision to renovate a downtown market in Seattle came from a shift in public opinion away from tear-it-down renewal and toward the care of popular landmarks. The landmark in question was no architectural treasure, but it was an unusual retail market that people looked at with affection—a once bustling, colorful farmers’ market offering fresh food of exceptional quality. When cities chose to build retail centers in the 1970s, they had different notions of retailing in mind. What the voter initiative called for was not a shopping mall in the contemporary suburban sense of that term but an old-fashioned produce market.”⁹²⁸

What made Pike Place Market different, however, was that the Historical Commission overseeing the project could veto tenants selected by the market’s developer, meaning that the market would struggle to turn a profit. As a result, Seattle formed the Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority and hired John Clise to run it as the business. Since the market’s preservation went beyond its historical bones, its management proved a challenge. Clise “worked patiently to find tenants the Historical Commission would approve and then regulated their business operations strictly enough for ideological preservationists but

928 Frieden et al., 117.

realistically enough for a merchant to make a living...He cultivated the necessary political support through endless negotiation to accommodate even such marginal groups as the street musicians who played in the market.”⁹²⁹ While Pike Place Market, like Ghirardelli Square and Trolley Square before it, substantiated the potential for a new kind of marketplace to thrive in the middle of the city, few projects would emulate its non-profit management model. Instead, it would be Faneuil Hall Marketplace that served as the standard to which a generation of festival marketplaces would hold themselves.

Benjamin Thompson and the City of Man

The career of Benjamin Thompson, the architect of Faneuil Hall, provides an instructive example of how architecture and urban planning changed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Thompson had been one of the founding members of The Architects' Collaborative (TAC), a firm formed in 1946 by Walter Gropius and seven young architects from Cambridge, Massachusetts. At TAC, Thompson had practiced and participated in the prevailing modernism of the day, with heavy influence from Gropius and his contemporaries. In 1964, he was selected by Gropius to succeed him as Chair of the Department of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, a post he held for four years and during which he formed his own firm, Benjamin Thompson Associates (BTA).

That Ben Thompson became the architect most closely associated with the festival marketplace seems an anomaly. Thompson's architectural career had been incubated among a group thoroughly embedded in an avant-garde modernism from the 1940s through the 1960s. While his commissions, both for TAC and later his own firm, displayed a humane sensibility, his designs nevertheless eschewed the flair and festivity evident in the popular “modern” architectural facades, storefronts, and signage of the era, for which Gruen, Baumfield, and Ketchum were all well known.

Thompson's departure from TAC in 1966, however, coincided with a shifting dialogue in schools of architecture as well as a heightened dissatisfaction with the accepted tenets of modernism. In a September 1966 article, Thompson wrote, “Not so long ago men felt free to admit they loved the meander of a river, a field of devil's paintbrush, or a woman's crazy loveliness. Today such a display of emotion makes us squirm. Do we dare to express delight at the sight of a soft summer sky? Can we still cry out at the anguish of our fellow man? Or does the cold shell of

929 Frieden et al., 118.

logic reduce us to apathy?”⁹³⁰ Accompanying his article was a series of photographs showing the anguished outlook of late 1960s America—a cityscape enveloped in fog; a polluted creek beneath the Bayonne Bridge in New Jersey; a young boy looking through a high chain link fence onto a deserted cityscape marked only by parking lots and housing towers. The changing state of the country and its cities in the mid-1960s, the race riots in particular, had forced Thompson to reconsider his basic assumptions in the profession.

In a second article in *Architectural Record* from April 1969, entitled “Visual Squalor, Social Disorder or A New Vision of the ‘City of Man,’” Thompson went even further.

“Above the din, a few observers comment that the issue is really ‘middle-class values.’ This at least helps to describe conditions that are basically the fault of all of us, although we tend to blame it on the nefarious “power structure” that runs our cities, dispensing welfare as well as privilege. Certainly those with the power to spend, to tear down and build, to create schools, housing and roads, have continually imposed the hollow world of supermarkets, canned music and deodorant on everyone in their path—and a clean, white, affluent middle-class world is equally alien to a southern Negro, an Idaho farm youth or a Brooklyn boy.”⁹³¹

In spite of his rhetoric, Thompson’s critique affirmed his environmentally deterministic stance, referring to “sensory deprivation and restriction” and studies “revealing deficient brain development of rats raised in a confined, unstimulating environment.”⁹³² In keeping with a tradition that went all the way back to Frederick Law Olmsted and was palpable among the progressive reformers of the early twentieth century, in the chaotic and spoiled environment, Thompson found his new blight. Though he never acknowledged the inherent contradiction in his rhetoric of “visual nourishment”⁹³³ for the soul of the displaced, his humanistic allusions to a “‘City of Man’ [that] would be an intimate city by day and a radiant city by night”⁹³⁴ were perfectly, if not intentionally, aligned with the emerging marketability of preservation. In describing his “City,” Thompson said.

“Its pedestrian streets and minirails would move at many levels though and around buildings, from below street level to the twentieth floor. Transportation and service

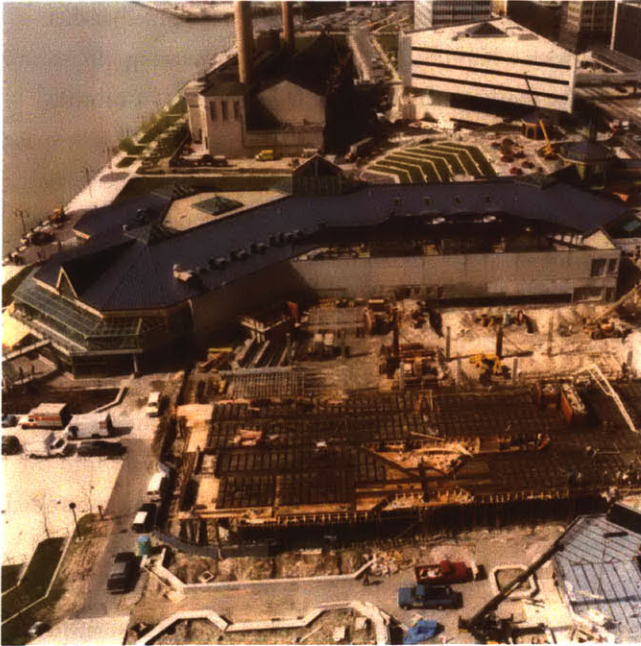
930 Benjamin Thompson. “The World Around Us: Toward an Architecture of Joy and Human Sensibility,” *Architectural Record* (September 1967): 153.

931 Benjamin Thompson. “Visual Squalor, social disorder or A new vision of the ‘City of Man,’” *Architectural Record* (April, 1969): 161.

932 Thompson, “Visual Squalor,” 162.

933 Ibid, 166.

934 Ibid, Ibid.



6.30

Portside Festival Marketplace under construction, Toledo, OH. Enterprise Development Company, James Rouse, 1984.

Credit: University of Toledo, Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections

networks would be not only conveniently separate but beautiful and colorful to see and to sense. Terraces and landscaped rooftops would be designed for maximum enjoyment of outdoor space and view. Housing would take the form of small, diversely scaled communities interspersed throughout the city with places to meet and things to do...As in Rockefeller Center or on the Left Bank, there would be dancing and skating and painting or fishing for people to watch, as they walked along watching you. Like Paris, it would be a pleasure to walk to work along any boulevard or side street past a mixture of shops, stands, and bakeries, showrooms, arcades, and architecture. And like Rome, art sculpture and architecture would mix unselfconsciously.”⁹³⁵

Thompson likened his “City of Man” to “the parade of gondolas” servicing Venice, walks along the Seine, the “street markets of Lausanne,” and the “action and serenity” of Tivoli Gardens.⁹³⁶ But he also referred to the “great possibilities set forth at Expo ’67...a city experiment of infinite variety.”⁹³⁷ In his speech and writings, Victor Gruen had also been known for his allusions to the World’s Fairs and expositions; to Disney; and to the great squares and agoras of Europe. Thompson carried on that tradition, the tradition of a festival modernism, in his notion of the marketplace.

The Pushcart Parade: Faneuil Hall and the Festival Marketplace

Seven years later, in 1976, Thompson would see his “City of Man” realized.

935 Thompson, “Visual Squalor,” 164.

936 Ibid, Ibid.

937 Ibid, Ibid.

The opening of Faneuil Hall Marketplace included “a bagpipe band, a man in a tricorne hat with a hand bell, and some ladies wearing nineteenth century dresses.”⁹³⁸ The market, which was only half leased six months before opening, brought in pushcarts where local artisans could rent space on weeklong leases, a temporary solution that turned into an accidental innovation which would be repeated elsewhere.⁹³⁹ More people came in its first year than visited Disneyland.⁹⁴⁰ The Rouse Company could never have predicted the market’s profitability, which outdid its suburban malls twofold (\$150 per square foot to \$300) after its first year in operation.

Yet Faneuil Hall was not Pike Place Market.⁹⁴¹ As Nicholas Dagen Bloom observed in this recent biography of Rouse, “the festival marketplace...became the Trojan Horse of the suburban reentry into the center city. Not only because the marketplace was a completely controlled environment combining the privatization of formerly public spaces and streets, and not only because the familiar chains moved in by the 1980s, but because the Rouse Company brought its system of mall management to the central city.”⁹⁴²

Following their success at Faneuil Hall, Rouse and Thompson would collaborate on a series of downtown projects that followed the same basic formula. Baltimore’s Harborplace, whose redevelopment marked the crystallization of the Inner Harbor redevelopment program first proposed in the mid-1950s, opened in 1980. South Street Seaport in New York opened in 1983.⁹⁴³ In 1979, the city of Norfolk, where Rouse and Victor Gruen had failed to get a redevelopment project off the ground in 1960s, called upon Rouse to create their own festival marketplace. With a trade area less than one-third the size of Baltimore and under half the size of Boston’s, Norfolk presented a challenge that Rouse was excited to accept. Working through his newly formed Enterprise Development Company

938 Olsen, 259.

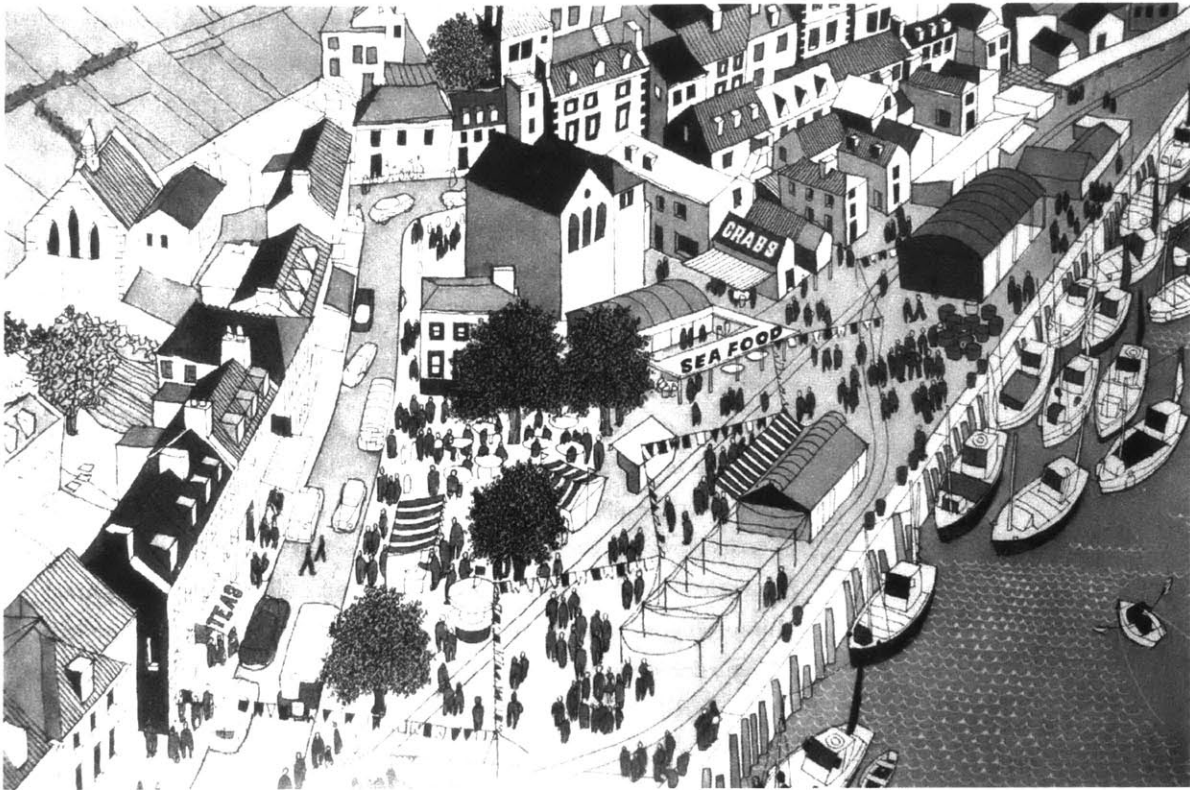
939 Ibid. 258.

940 Ibid, 260.

941 See Bloom, 177. Bloom states that “Rouse had entirely overlooked the salient elements that distinguished Pike Place and Indianapolis City Market from his festival marketplaces. Bernard Frieden and Lynn Sagalyn offer a succinct portrait of Pike Place...that points out these differences...Pike place merchants benefitted from below-market rents, simple renovation standards kept rents low, and management had decided to reject chain businesses.” It is worth noting, however, that the original Starbucks started just across from Pike Place, indicating the potential inevitability of the market catalyzing highly commercialized activities.

942 Bloom, 158.

943 The Seaport project had originated as the South Street Seaport Museum in 1967. In a December 1974 article entitled “Wanted: Not-for-profit entrepreneurs,” Jonathan Barnett predicted the tension between “authentic” or sensitive historic development and bland real estate proposals that ultimately characterized the Seaport project. Ultimately, the planned shift of the actual market to Hunts Point in the Bronx endangered the project’s “festival” appeal from the start. Jonathan Barnett. “Wanted: Not-for-profit entrepreneurs,” *Architectural Record* (1974): 122-123.



and its partner the Enterprise Foundation,⁹⁴⁴ Rouse and Norfolk planned Waterside Marketplace, which opened in 1983. Other cities signed on too. In Richmond, there was the 6th Street Marketplace; in Toledo, Portside Festival Marketplace (1984). Rouse, working with the Mott Foundation, even worked with Flint, Michigan to open a marketplace—the Water Street Pavilion—in 1985.

But in the small and mid-sized cities, the marketplaces, like the pedestrian malls before them, withered. In 1987, Battle Creek closed its marketplace. Flint’s Water Street Pavilion shut down in 1990, followed shortly thereafter by Toledo’s Portside. Norfolk and Richmond both struggled, the latter even suing the Enterprise Development Company for promising too much.⁹⁴⁵ “[The] fundamental problem...” says Olsen, “was the difference between big cities and small cities. While there were some signs of urban revitalization in the nation’s larger metropolises, places on the scale of Richmond or small Midwestern factory towns continued

6.31

“The Line of Life”

Drawing of the Looe Sea Front,
Gordon Cullen, 1950, *The
Architectural Review*.

944 For a history of the Enterprise Development Company and the Enterprise Foundation, see Olsen, 298-301. Rouse in the early 1980s started the Enterprise Foundation to aid the “cause of better cities” and the construction of affordable housing, as well as the Enterprise Development Company, a new real estate firm that was separate from his old company. According to Olsen, “Rouse thought it might be possible to establish a niche for pocket-size urban projects—rehabilitations to existing building and even construction of snug new festival marketplaces. These could be built in smaller cities that had recently begun to fascinate him.” (Olsen, 300)

945 Olsen, 328.

to have difficulties. In Toledo, the city's only remaining downtown department store, Macy's, had announced its intention to leave even before Portside opened. When asked what this meant for his plans, Rouse had gallantly replied 'Nothing at all, that's the old city. [Portside] is the new city.' But to be a new city, buoyed by a flow of yuppies back downtown, was not yet the future of places like Toledo or Flint or Battle Creek."⁹⁴⁶

The Delineation of a Festival Modernism

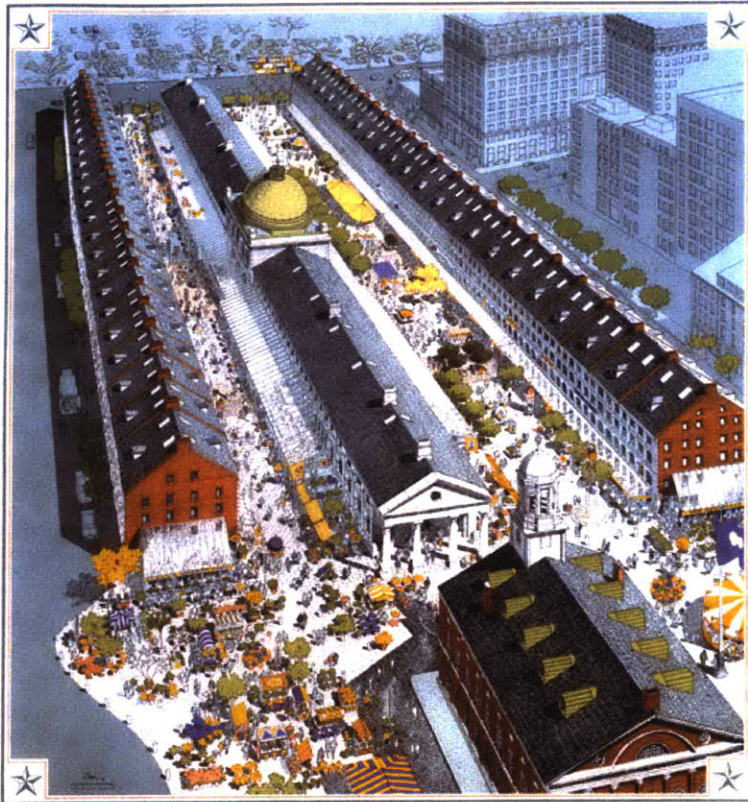
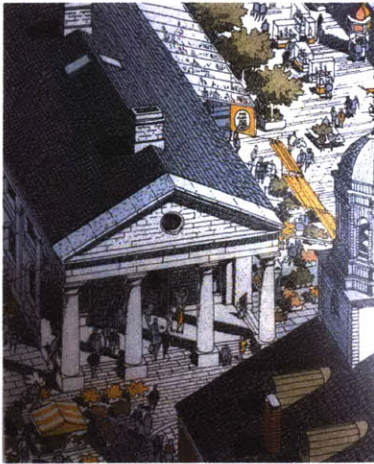
In a drawing for *The Architectural Review* in 1950 of the Looe Sea Front entitled "The Line of Life," Gordon Cullen had captured everything that the festival marketplace was to become.⁹⁴⁷ A chaotic jumble of buildings met at a confluence of two streets. At their joining was a public square that teemed with seafood shacks, temporary stands and kiosks, and a gaggle of boats crowding for a place along the embankment walls of the harbor. Flags stretched along thin wire overhead and trolley tracks, slight and unimposing, streamed through the middle of the bustling marketplace. Cullen's drawings had been highly influential in humanizing modernism, and garnered praise and admiration from William H. Whyte and Jane Jacobs. His influence on a generation of delineators, including Thomas Todd, Ben Althen, Carlos Diniz, Helmut Jacoby, among many others, was undeniable.

In the mid-1970s, as places like Ghirardelli Square and Pike Place Market had demonstrated, a pervasive nostalgia for the cluttered urbanism of old cities had become palpable. The desire to look back was fueled not only by critics of urban renewal and the onset of preservation, but by a disappointment and frustration with the unrealized promise of the Great Society and the turmoil that followed it. For the promotional renderings created for Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Baltimore's Harborplace, and the South Street Seaport, James Rouse and Ben Thompson turned to Carlos Diniz. Following the success of the Fort Worth plan, Diniz had left Victor Gruen Associates to create his own firm and soon after emerged as one of the top delineators of his generation. He did work for prominent architectural firms through the 1960s and 1970s, including Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, Minoru Yamasaki, and HOK Architects.

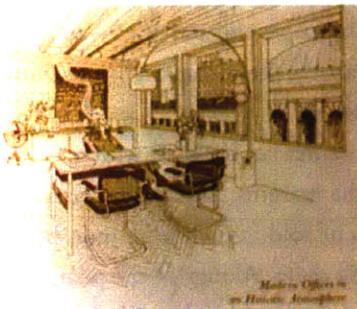
In 1974, as Rouse and Thompson were struggling to get the city's approval for the project, Roy Williams, the Marketplace project director for Faneuil Hall, suggested that they hire Diniz to create a promotional poster. According to Ben and Jane Thompson, Diniz's rendering for the project made "a vision so seductively real that few viewers recognized the

946 Olsen, 329.

947 Gosling, *Cullen*, 37.



**FANEUIL HALL
MARKETPLACE** 

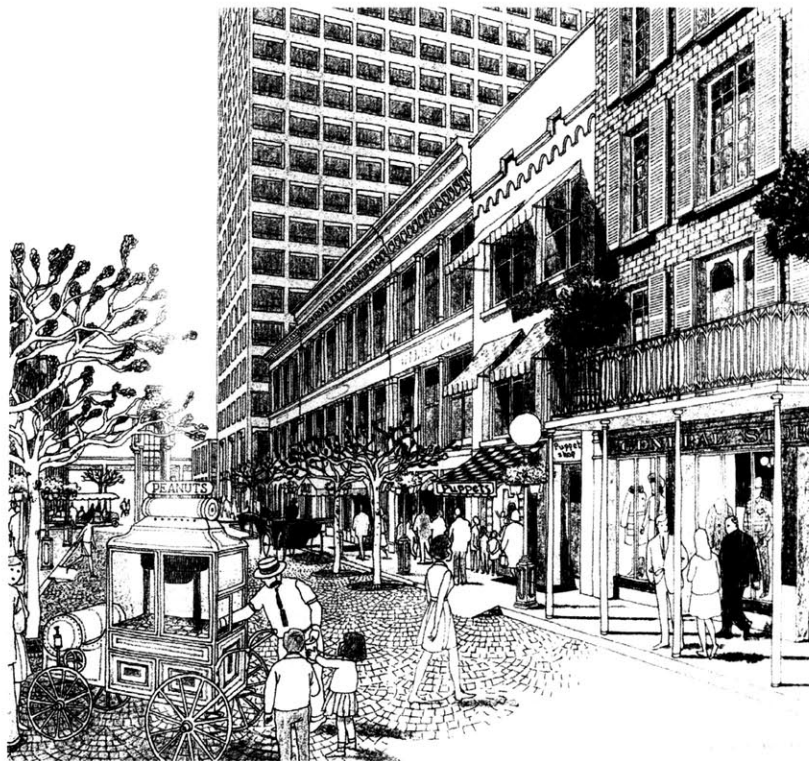


6.32
Faneuil Hall Marketplace
Promotional Poster, 1974 for Benjamin
Thompson Associates.
Illustrated by Carlos Diniz.

6.33
(left)
“Modern Offices in a Historic
Atmosphere” from backside of above
poster.

6.34

Laclede's Landing, St. Louis
Illustrated by Carlos Diniz for HOK
Architects, 1967.
Building Illusion (1992)



magnitude of the transformation.⁹⁴⁸ Diniz's rendering for the project appeared in the form of a two-sided poster. On the front side, he drew the market and its flanking buildings in an aerial perspective. The main drawing used a language by then familiar in downtown plans. Lush kiosks with flower stands, children grasping balloons, and merry-go-rounds enlivened the public spaces between buildings. Key elements of the scheme, such as a small sunken pool, an oversized flagpole, and an information kiosk, were colored purple, and interspersed by a series of playful follies. The scene was carefully detailed to exhibit varied programs for the public space. The main walks were crowded with people and activities—an outdoor exhibit on the history of the area's merchant ships; a flower show; games; pavilions; flagpoles; and clock towers.

On the back side was a plan of the market building with a small section and perspectival scenes in the margins. The market plan included a detailed listing of the items to be sold in each storefront, but not the names of the shops that would sell them. Alongside the plan, Diniz placed sideways facing elevations of the store blocks with detailed symbols of market nostalgia beside them, including an old camera, a pipe,

948 Diniz, *Building Illusion*, 46. According to the Thompsons, Diniz had sparred with the designers about including far more trees in the renderings than were actually planned. A compromise was reached, but it provides a good exhibition of how Diniz played a significant role in the iterative visioning and design process as a delineator.

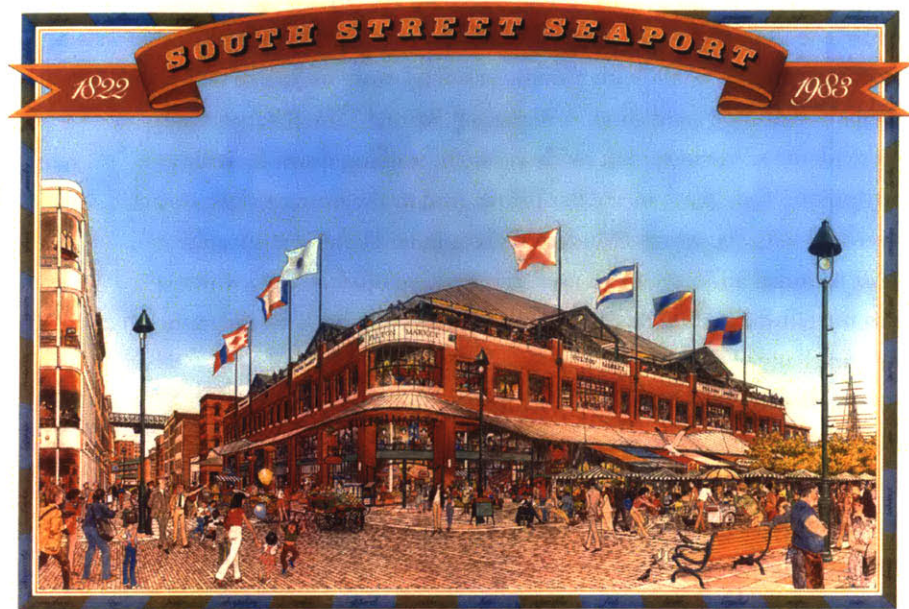
French horns, a partially eaten wheel of cheese, and a phonograph. Small perspective drawings in the margins showed a pair of women peering into the storefront of an “early American living” store on top of which stood a casual dress wear shop. A restaurant named “The Kitchen Cellar” was rendered at the lower left, with a woman walking down its steps as a conversation took place in the bar below. And in the bottom right corner, advertised with the words “Modern Offices in an Historic Atmosphere,” Diniz included an image of an executive looking out his office window onto the refurbished market blocks below, reflecting back on how much his city had changed.

The scenes painted by Diniz for the South Street Seaport and Baltimore’s Harborplace, presented a similar set of activities. For the Seaport, he drew the market as a complex urban entourage scene. At the bottom right, a burly fishmonger chats up a working class girl in a sundress. Eager tourists snap photographs of an upper class New York lady in furs escorted by a gentleman in a gray suit (suddenly out of place in a sea of casual clothing). A woman struggles to contain the excitement of a Dalmatian barking at small dog hiding coyly behind a gelato cart. There are fruit stands, birds flying, balloons drifting away from the hands of eager children, food courts, and business meetings everywhere. The scene is rambunctious and alive. Though anchored by a massive glass mall and with no fish market or fish mongers to speak of in the proposal itself, the Seaport drew upon the familiar motifs and energies of Diniz’s past work, here restaged into a theater of bustle and clutter, in the background of which commercial enterprise hummed.

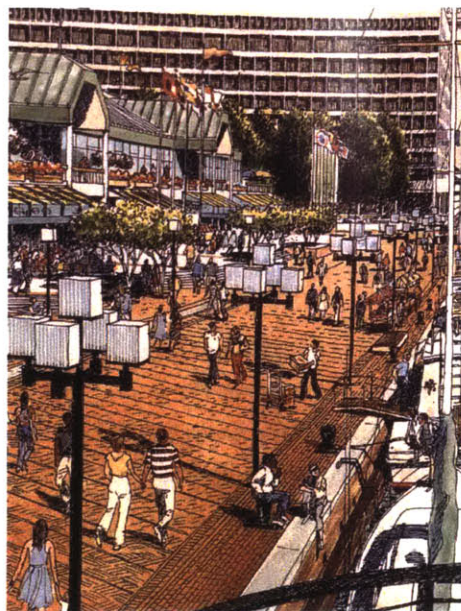
Diniz had done his first drawings of a festival marketplace project for Laclede’s Landing in St. Louis, designed by HOK Architects in 1967. As compared to his later work for Harborplace and South Street Seaport, the drawings at Laclede’s Landing seem remarkably conservative. Though the characteristic elements of the proposal, including a festive steamboat, kiosks, vendors, and storefronts all make appearances, the people in the scene are “planners’ people.” The men wear suits. The women are ferrying children. Modern towers loom in the distance, an imposing presence despite the preservation of historic blocks. There are no birds.⁹⁴⁹ Laclede’s Landing drew upon the same three narratives that Gruen had set forth a decade before—the executive, the merchant, and the shopper. Though his drawings included a pushcart, a few balloons, and historic façades, the scene had changed little.

Ten years later, the main scene drawn for Harborplace (1978) presented a public space that played host to multiple narratives. In the

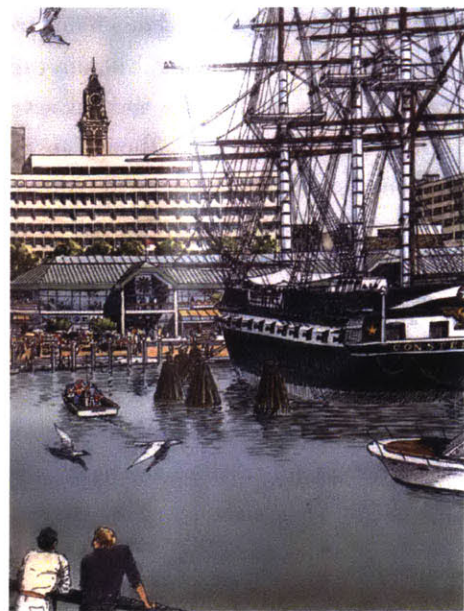
949 Diniz, *Building Illusion*, 28-31.



SEAPORT MARKET PLACE LIMITED PARTNERSHIP • NEW YORK CITY • AN AFFILIATE OF THE ROUSE COMPANY



6.35
(top)
 South Street Seaport, New York City
 Illustrated by Carlos Diniz for Benjamin
 Thompson Associates, 1983
 Credit: *Building Illusion* (1994)



6.36
(above)
 Harborplace, Baltimore
 Illustrated by Carlos Diniz for Benjamin
 Thompson Associates, 1978
 Credit: *Building Illusion* (1994)

foreground, an African-American man and a white man, both in casual dress, have a conversation from an overlook; a pair of bicyclists in shorts arrives at the scene; teenagers parade down the main walk, seagulls litter the sky; goods are being loaded onto a boat.⁹⁵⁰ In the middle of the public walk by the harbor, a pair of large glass market halls with open balconies makes a scene of sidewalk cafes, athletic stores, pushcarts, and restaurants.

The creation of a multi-racial, if not multi-generational, narrative at Harborplace would have been inconceivable a decade earlier. But after the riots of 1968, Baltimore started hosting fairs to bring the city back together. The first Baltimore City Fair was held in Charles Center in 1970 and by 1973, when fairs had moved to the Inner Harbor, they would draw two million people. According to David Harvey, in his article “A View from Federal Hill,” the fairs were conceived as a way of quelling unrest and bringing people together, but they “also helped Baltimore rediscover the ancient Roman formula of bread and circuses as a means of masking social problems and controlling discontent.”⁹⁵¹ “With the crowds pouring in,” he says, “it was a short step to commercializing the city fair, first by adding all manner of ethnic festivals, concerts, and spectacular events...to draw even more people downtown. Then, having proved the existence of a market, the next step was to institutionalize a permanent commercial circus through the construction of Harborplace...and pleasure citadels of all kinds.”⁹⁵²

Festival marketplaces, like shopping malls and pedestrian malls, offered a counterpoint to the prevailing narrative of the dying city at mid-century. Designed and conceived as convivial agoras that could sure up the financial interests of downtown businesses then fleeing cities, they perfected rather than revolutionized urban retail by privatizing the management of spaces which had been public and turning them into fairs that exuded the illusion of public-ness through an ingenious alignment of capital with preservation. Despite their emphasis on heritage and joy, these projects represented a next step for Rouse and other developers who had already saturated the suburban market then killing inner cities. In playing upon historical themes and sating the national shift towards preservation, Rouse and the architect Benjamin Thompson achieved the final evolution of modernism—a “modernism of ghosts.”

In 1981 Robert Campbell had called Faneuil Hall “an impersonation of a kind of urban life that no longer exists in most of America...[and] a theatrical representation of street life.” “It has to be

950 Diniz, 70-71.

951 David Harvey. “A View from Federal Hill.” *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1991), 236.

952 Harvey, 237-239.

6.37

Faneuil Hall Marketplace, 1978.
G.E. Kidder Smith Collection,
MIT Libraries.



this,” he said, “because that is the stage we have to go through as we begin cautiously, self-consciously to re-enact the urban culture we abandoned.”⁹⁵³ Campbell’s self-conscious re-enactment of urban life marked the final stage of modernism, what Berman had suggested was the distinguishing feature of 1970s modernism. “The modernism of the 1970s,” he said, “was distinguished by its desire and power to remember, to remember so much of what modern societies...want to forget. But when contemporary modernists lose touch with and deny their own modernity, they only echo the ruling class self-delusion that it had conquered the troubles and perils of the past.”⁹⁵⁴ By aligning preservation with free enterprise in the 1970s, Rouse discovered that sentimentality and nostalgia could be as powerful as codes and regulations in enforcing rehabilitation and prompting renewal, something that could not have been anticipated in the 1940s and early 1950s when he was advocating for the Baltimore plan. The “denial of modernity,” through the commercialization of history, proved, in the end, to be what downtowns could sell, but the suburban malls could not.

953 Robert Campbell, “Evaluation: Boston’s Upper of Urbanity,” *AIA Journal* 70.7 (1981): 29.
954 Berman, 346.

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CONCLUSION





CONCLUSION

“The city of Sophronia is made up of two half-cities. In one there is a great roller coaster with its steep humps, the carousel with its chain spokes, the Ferris wheel of spinning cages, the death-ride with the crouching motorcyclists, the big top with the clump of trapezes hanging in the middle. The other half-city is of stone and marble and cement, with the bank, the factories, the palaces, the slaughterhouse, the school, and all the rest. One of the half-cities is permanent, the other is temporary, and when the period of its sojourn is over, they uproot it, dismantle it, and take it off, transplanting it to the vacant lots of another half-city. And so every year the day comes when the workmen remove the marble pediments, lower the stone walls, the cement pylons, take down the Ministry, the monument, the docks, the petroleum refinery, the hospital, load them on trailers, to follow from stand to stand their annual itinerary. Here remains the half-Sophronia of the shooting-galleries and the carousels, the shout suspended from the cart of the headlong roller coaster, and it begins to count the months, the days it must wait before the caravan returns and a complete life can begin once again.”

-Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*⁹⁵⁵

“No city has ever died from [too much] traffic, but many have died from too little.”

-T.T. Wylie, as quoted by Victor Gruen in notes for a talk to the Associates of VGA

“There are today those who, because of the deterioration of the appearance of the city, are inclined to believe that its disappearance would be no great loss; who feel that in an era in which indirect human communication by telephone, radio, [and] television has vastly improved, in a time when individual mobility by automobile has become possible, the city is no longer necessary and that decentralization of human settlement in sprawling form all over the countryside is the pattern of the future. There lives in this country a whole generation who, having never experienced the benefit of truly urban life and having never seen a well functioning city- that means one of good appearance- wouldn't shed a tear if all our cities would disappear.”

- Victor Gruen, Notes for a talk to VGA, February 13, 1962 (9)⁹⁵⁶

955 Italo Calvino. *Invisible Cities* (New York, NY: Harcourt, 1974), 63.

956 Victor Gruen. “Notes for a talk to the Associates of VGA,” February 13, 1962. Crawford Westbrook Collection Box 16.

7.1

opposite

Fulton Mall, Fresno, 2014.

Credit: Benjamin Hill

A Two-way Street: The Demolition of the Fulton Mall

As of this writing, Fresno's Fulton Mall, the apex of Victor Gruen's work in downtown and a unique exemplar of mid-century modern landscape design by Garret Eckbo, is undergoing demolition. After a prolonged legal battle, during which preservationists attempted to have the mall listed on the National Register of Historic Places and prevent its demolition over insufficient environmental review, the Mayor Ashley Swearingin, city and regional leaders broke ground on the mall's demolition and began its long awaited reconstruction as a two-way street on March 3, 2016.

In arguing for the street's reopening, the Mayor often referred to the need for more "eyes on the street," applying the neighborhood surveillance of Jane Jacobs's intimate street theater to the necessity of through traffic on Fulton Street.⁹⁵⁷ A December 2013 Report by the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) called for rebuilding of the mall using a "complete streets" philosophy that would balance the interests of bikes, buses, cars, and pedestrians, yet also reiterated a need to retain the "historic fabric and character of the Mall."⁹⁵⁸ Though the original 2010 study of the downtown area by Moule & Polyzoides, a prominent New Urbanist architecture and planning firm based in Pasadena, had considered ten alternatives for the project, the traffic studies, the economic reports, and the plans all pointed to the same result—reopening the street to traffic.

A report from 2013 sponsored by the Downtown Fresno Partnership, titled "The Experiment of American Pedestrian Malls," echoed their findings.⁹⁵⁹ Of the roughly 200 pedestrian malls that had been built in the United States, 89% had failed.⁹⁶⁰ The report, like the Mayor and the Department of Transportation, called upon Fresno to adapt a "main street approach to revitalization" and stated definitively, "The American pedestrian mall, including Fresno's Fulton Mall, is by most accounts a failed experiment that, left alone, will continue to deteriorate." This statement was followed by economic statistics indicating lower vacancy rates, private investment, and increased property values in cities that had done away with their malls. Further, it pointed out that the conditions that made pedestrian malls successful in places like Boulder, Minneapolis,

957 "TIGER 2013: Application for the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project" (Fresno, CA: City of Fresno, 2013).

958 "Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project: Finding of Adverse Affect." (Sacramento, CA: California Department of Transportation, December 2013), 3.

959 Cole E. Judge. "The Experiment of American Pedestrian Malls: Trends Analysis, Necessary Indicators for Success and Recommendations for Fresno's Fulton Mall." *Fresno Future Conference Strong Cities, Strong Communities Downtown Fresno Partnership*, (Fresno CA: Strong Cities, Strong Communities, 2013).

960 Judge, 1.



7.2

A “Complete Street” for Fulton Street, Fresno. Mall rendering, 2016.

Credit: Downtown Fresno Partnership

or Miami Beach—beaches, tourism, and universities—were absent in Fresno.⁹⁶¹ Locals and businesses described the mall as an “uncomfortable and threatening environment” that brought “loiterers and transients.” A long list of failed malls, from Little Rock, Arkansas to Burlington, Iowa to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, served as a cautionary tale.⁹⁶²

That the pedestrian mall had “failed” to save downtown as promised seemed to have enshrined itself in the national conscience at some point around 1987. An article in *The Wall Street Journal* that year stated that the pedestrian mall, “once a panacea for downtown planning, had flopped.” Writing of Eugene’s ambitious pedestrianization effort from 1970, the author wrote, “it became wasteland. Pedestrians stayed away, partly out of fear that mall’s many trees and fountains were hiding muggers. Motorists skirted the area, confused by the reconfigured street routes. With sales much slower than expected, merchants departed and storefronts went vacant.”⁹⁶³ Writing one year later of Fresno’s demise, Peter King reflected, “Failure, like success, generates its own momentum. Bright facades began to drop. The trams stopped running. Building owners and shopkeepers no longer felt compelled to improve their stores. The north end of the mall emptied, and its stores became roosts for winos and pigeons...twilight faded to darkness and the mall began to empty, fast. Gates were drawn over doorways. The old men of the mall moved in slouching ranks toward their retirement hotels. Uniformed guards escorted female workers to parking lots. It looked like a retreat.”⁹⁶⁴

The scene at Fresno’s Fulton Mall today, however, is not one of

961 Judge, 12-13.

962 Ibid, 5-8.

963 Laurie M. Grossman. “City Pedestrian Malls Fail to Fulfill Promise of Revitalizing Downtown,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 17, 1987.

964 King, “Rise and Fall of Urban Mall.”

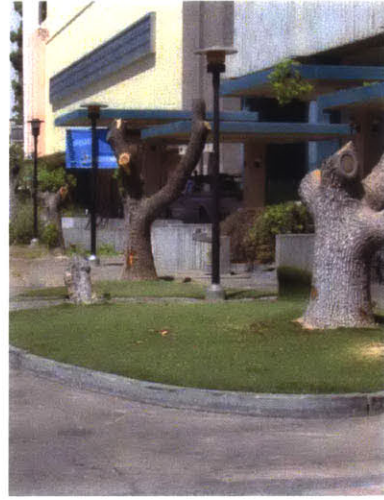


7.3
Fulton Mall, Fresno, 2013.
Credit: Dave Prasad, Fresno Alliance

“winos and pigeons.” The businesses along Fulton Mall cater to a mostly Hispanic clientele. With stores like Botanica San Judas, Goodwill, and Los Panchos Mexican restaurant, today’s mall has become a center of Hispano-American life, in which the Mariposa Mall hosts Cinco de Mayo parties and old men lounge under the generous shade trees envisioned by Eckbo. While there is little question that Fulton Mall did not live up to its “promise” to save downtown, it is imperative to interrogate the notions of blight, decline, and flight that justified the modernism of which this project was representative, and which Fresno is in danger of repeating.

The reconstruction proposal for the Fulton Mall stands only superficially oppositional to the basic tenets on which Gruen and Eckbo’s modernist superblock was based. The project proposes two-way, rather than one-way streets. On-street parking is a boon to business, not a recipe for congestion. Surface parking lots are “parking craters,” ripe for future development. One rendering shows a light rail running down the middle of the street, yet none of them show buses.

The Fulton Mall’s demolition and reconstruction, like the original Fulton Mall, represents an effort by the city to restore downtown as a middle-class shopping district for affluent white customers. This underlying objective, which transcends modernism and post-modernism, is reiterated by rendered images of the project, which substitute an upscale shopping



street for a down-market mall frequented primarily by minorities. It is the prerogative of cities to reinvest in their downtowns and to ensure that their public spaces are not only maintained, but also managed, activated, and loved. That the Fulton Mall has lasted relatively unchanged for over 50 years is a testament to its design and to the visionary plan laid out by Victor Gruen. Most pedestrian malls have vanished with little fanfare or press.

In the 1966 article “Planners’ People,” the authors asked:

“Are planners actually guilty of ignoring or overlooking the existence of different groups and of the variety of values that should be common to a democracy? The effect of such myopia would be more than to give priority to those projects whose greatest and most direct benefits are enjoyed by the favored group; it would also be to define all city problems and propose their solutions according to an unvaried and often inappropriate value system. There would be no recognition of the fact that some groups see dilapidated buildings where others see an opportunity for self-improvement, that some groups regard a street as an impersonal thoroughfare where others see a place for communal activity, that some groups derive aesthetic satisfaction from fine architectural detailing and others from a display of pink plastic flamingos set neatly on a grassy lawn.”⁹⁶⁵

Fresno’s rehabilitation and the demise of its pedestrian mall more broadly should not be accepted as an inevitable failure, but as the product of a unique American political and economic system that puts cities and their downtowns at a disadvantage. The success of pedestrian streets in cities across the world, not only in older European centers, but also in China, Japan, Latin America, and the Middle East, demonstrates this. Victor Gruen, in his book *The Heart of Our Cities* (1964) said as much.

965 Wood et al., “Planners’ People,” 233.

7.4, 7.5, 7.6

Fulton Mall Demolition, Fresno, May, 2016.

Credit: Eduardo Navaroo

“One of the reasons for the comparative lethargy of government in its attitude toward the fate of American cities lies in the composition of the Congress of the United States...measures that would be helpful to the large and growing majority of urbanites usually arouse little interest in Congress and are more often than not defeated.” Gruen continues, “To make matters worse, it is usually the economically weakest part of the populace which lives within the city boundaries, requiring the greatest amount of public services but unable to pay the required taxes, and the economically strongest segment which lives outside, enjoying lower tax rates and better services.”⁹⁶⁶ The failure of regional planning in the United States and the predominance of rural (and suburban) policies and interests at the Congressional level has certainly contributed to challenges of downtown, and only worsened in its inequities and persistent segregation since Gruen’s time.

The Fresno case, however, points to a larger vacuum of ideas in planning since the Gruen era. Gruen accepted modernism’s notion of a singular alignment between space and function, and in keeping with the era, he rejected of the chaotic mixture associated with blight and deterioration. Yet in the wholeness of the scheme, he used separation as an opportunity for festivity and play, forging pedestrian spaces that delighted in variety at the expense of balance.

The shift from a modernist street based on free flow to the balanced streetscape—a shared, livable, or complete street—has never been fully unpacked. Though New Urbanism called for a return to the traditional street design,⁹⁶⁷ rejecting the highway for the boulevard and the pedestrian mall for the main street, this rhetorical shift, which is best embodied in the changing preference from one-way to two-way, merely substituted postmodern typologies and development strategies for modern ones, without changing the underlying structures that governed them. Thus, the people movers and the monorails of the 1960s and 1970s became the streetcars and the light rail systems of the 1980s and 1990s. In many cases, these projects, perhaps best embodied by Buffalo’s “failed” transit mall, failed to resolve the structural defects at their core—the failure of regional planning, the persistence of segregation, the competition between downtown retail and suburban cities willing to rezone green fields for shopping centers on a whim. The spirit of free enterprise that could save downtown could also destroy it, and in many cases, the dying downtowns

966 Gruen, *Heart of Our Cities*. 346.

967 See Allan B. Jacobs, Elizabeth Macdonald, and Yodan Rofe. *The Boulevard Book: History, Evolution, Design of Multiway Boulevards*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) and Allan B. Jacobs. *Great Streets* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995).

of the 1940s and 1950s became the dead downtowns of the 1980s and 1990s.

Though the transition from modernism to postmodernism may be interpreted as an essentially rhetorical, or even cosmetic shift, federal policies did change the parameters of development, even as cities found ways to justify or adapt preexisting projects to meet new federal priorities. Historic and environmental preservation and civil rights legislation passed from the mid-1960s through the early 1970s changed the field of planning and prevented the outright destruction wrought by urban renewal and activist business coalitions. While preservation policies have created an environment more sensitive to communities, landscapes, and memory, they have also pre-empted a stagnancy of vision and an impediment to long-range planning by the public sector, in favor of incentivized “public-private” partnerships that can erode the public interest when poorly managed. The success of the festival marketplaces and the mixed-use complexes built downtown in the 1970s and 1980s in contrast to the pedestrian malls of the 1960s and 1970s represents a critical dichotomy in this respect. Managed spaces that could appeal to affluent white consumers from the suburbs came at the expense of privatization, even in cases like Faneuil Hall, where the spaces contained the appearance of public-ness, yet were in fact privately managed. The 2016 conflict over solicitors in New York’s Time Square pedestrian plaza reiterates the challenge of management and security in public spaces, as well as the persistent tendency to try to resolve the social problems that manifest themselves in public spaces by sacrificing the public interest or removing the space entirely.⁹⁶⁸

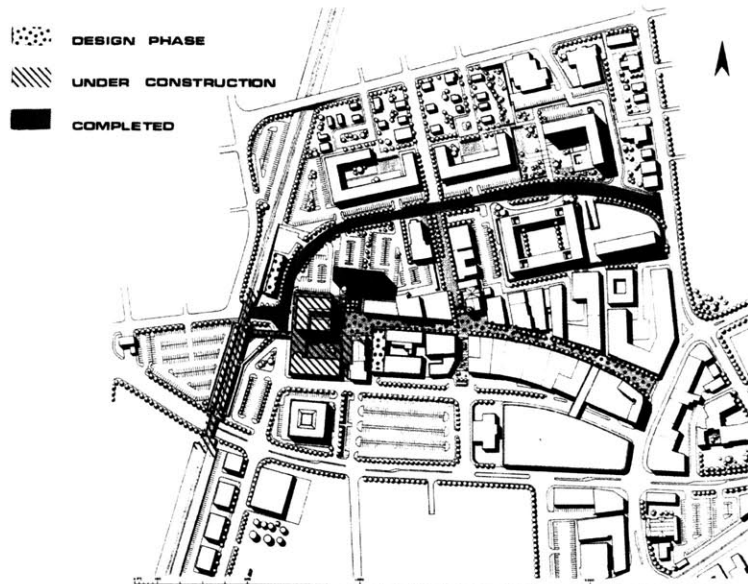
From Yesterday to Today

I decided to undertake this study because I was dissatisfied with the standard narrative of failure for pedestrian malls in United States and frustrated by the David & Goliath caricature of urban renewal taught in schools of planning. Having wandered in the footsteps of Victor Gruen through the squares of Vienna and Copenhagen’s Tivoli Gardens, like the aged and bitter Charles Blessing, I too asked: “*why* here in America... *why* should our CBDs fade away when in most of the rest of the world the central city becomes ever more dominant, more exciting, and in many respects more beautiful and humane?”⁹⁶⁹ In setting out to answer this question, my investigation evolved into a far-reaching narrative not only about the pedestrian mall or the downtown plan, but also about the

968 See Michael Grynbaum and Matt Flegenheimer. “De Blasio Raises Prospect of Removing Times Square Pedestrian Plazas.” *The New York Times*, August 20, 2015.

969 Redstone, xii.

7.7
Pedestrian Mall and Government
Center Complex, Malden, MA.
Architects: Doxiadis Associates
Credit: *The New Downtowns*, Louis
G. Redstone, 1976.



history and meaning of planning itself, its relationship to design, and its personality from yesterday to today.

In the course of my study, I found, buried in Redstone's compendium, an old plan for my own hometown.⁹⁷⁰ It had all of the familiar elements of Gruen's epitome district—the circular loop, the immense parking structures at the periphery, even a pedestrian mall, a civic center, and an elevated walkway (never built). In understanding and unpacking the plans and projects of the urban renewal era, which planners today casually dismiss but rarely interrogate, I have discovered and learned how to look at cities for what they were, what they are, and what they wanted to be.

Today, the narrative of cities has changed and it is worth briefly reflecting upon those changes in relationship to this thesis. Among the most important findings in this study was the divergent fate of large cities as opposed to small and mid-sized cities. Though much of contemporary planning is rightly focused on how to preserve and advance affordable housing in the face of gentrification, that narrative is far different in Toledo than in New York. Many smaller and mid-sized cities and downtowns are not much different today than they were in the 1980s. On a recent trip to Houston's downtown, I was reminded of Peter King's description of the characters in the Fresno Mall in the mid-1980s. In Memphis, where a streetcar transit mall replaced the Mid-America Mall in the 1980s, I walked

970 Redstone, 22-23. Government Center and Pleasant Street Complex, Malden, MA. Master Plan architects: Doxiadis Associates Inc., Robert J. Lynch Landscape Architects: Sasaki, Dawson & Demay, Inc.



7.8
Better Block Event, Dallas, 2012.
Credit: Team Better Block



7.9
“Interim” Pedestrian Plaza, Brooklyn,
New York. Credit: NYC DOT

vacant streets with vacant storefronts. Though Boston and San Francisco may thrive, Youngstown and Dubuque are still scratching their heads trying to figure out what happened and what to do next. The downtowns grappling with gentrification and displacement are fewer than those whose stores close on Saturdays for lack of foot traffic. While the popular dialogue has shifted from *recentralization* to historic and environmental preservation to neighborhood and demographic preservation, that narrative doesn't apply everywhere and many cities have been all but left behind.

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the experimental street closing. Reminiscent of the experimental malls of the late 1950s, neighborhood activists and national “better block”⁹⁷¹ advocates have taken to creating low-cost, temporary visions of the future

971 “Team Better Block: Making Places Better,” Accessed April 2016, <http://teambetterblock.com/>.

aimed at building constituencies for change. Foundations have funded these efforts,⁹⁷² seeking to revive Main Streets and downtowns through renewed investment and citizen participation. Larger cities like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles have also touted the economic benefits of their own interim street transformations. They manifest themselves in multiple mutations—interim pedestrian plazas; pilot projects; open streets; parklets; better blocks; tactical urbanism; and DIY-streets. Collectively, these projects express both continuity and ambiguity. They embody the twin desire to both improve the revenue generating potential of a street and the attractiveness of public space, while also trying to forestall its gentrification, a contradictory impulse not unlike that paradox faced by Gruen and Rouse in reconciling the regional shopping center with downtown renewal.

The fad for the pilot, the temporary, and the tactical ultimately reflects an impatience with planning and a questioning of its core functions. In the course of reviewing many of the plans and plan makers of the twentieth century, I have discovered many names whom history has forgotten—Harland Bartholomew, Ladislav Segoe, John Nolen, Victor Gruen, and David Wallace, to name a few. There is no inevitability in the production of a plan that delineates the future. A vision of a place, whether it be a city, region, neighborhood, or downtown, is not a prerequisite to its coming into being. Yet plans do matter, and as the iconic images of Gruen's Fort Worth remind us, they have the potential to inspire and shape physical space, even as they themselves pass into ephemera. Embedded in their images, if you look closely, are clues of visions past and future, traces of thought and inspiration, and hopes of festivity as well as improvement. I have entitled this thesis *festival modernism* because I discovered in the work of Victor Gruen and others a humanism at odds with our preconceptions of modernism, and a modernism that indulged in a carnival spirit. This brief moment in history was formative but forgotten, and as we begin the gradual erasure of its follies, may we read the plans that we seek to improve upon and in doing so, discover our modern selves.

972 “Better Block Foundation to help people build more vibrant, connected communities with \$775,000 from Knight Foundation; New nonprofit will give communities the know-how and tools to rapidly transform underutilized public spaces and blocks,” January, 13 2016, <http://www.knightfoundation.org/press-room/press-release/better-block-foundation-help-people-build-more-vib/>.

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