

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
ROCKPORT, TEXAS

TITLE: Comprehensive Plan – Rockport, Texas

AUTHOR: Harland Bartholomew and Associates

SUBJECT: Introduction
Economic Base Study
Population
Land Use Plan
The Thoroughfare Plan
Central Business District Plan
Public Utilities System
Parks and Recreation
Regulatory Measures and Administration
Capital Improvements Program
Administration of the Plan

DATE: April, 1969

LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY: Rockport City Plan Commission

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ABSTRACT: Rockport, Texas, on the Gulf Coast 35 miles northeast of Corpus Christi and the New Padre Island National Seashore, will continue to urbanize rapidly as industrial growth and tourist-resort activities expand. With about 4,000 in the city and 8,000 in the planning area today, by 1990 the plan anticipates 18,000 and 25,000 respectively. The land use plan, based on long-range goals for the city, proposes residential, commercial, industrial and public areas needed to serve the future population. Proposals to turn poor drainage into a recreational asset are coordinated with plans to revive the commercial function downtown and expand convention, tourist, and community recreation facilities. The plan envisions full use of the extraordinary coastal environment for the employment of residents and tourists alike, turning liabilities into assets while conserving important natural features such as groves of live oak trees, beaches, bays, and wildlife areas. A definitive five-year capital improvement program outlines the first stages in implementation of the plan.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Rockport, Texas

Prepared for

City Council and City Planning Commission

Prepared through the cooperation of the Texas State Department of Health.

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Prepared by

**Harland Bartholomew and Associates
Planning, Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Urban Renewal
Saint Louis, Missouri**

April, 1969



Est. 1919

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING - ENGINEERING - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE - URBAN RENEWAL

165 N. Meramec Avenue
Saint Louis, Missouri 63105
314 726-1300

April, 1969

PARTNERS

Eldridge Lovelace
William S. Pollard, Jr.
Charles P. Clayton
Frederic M. Robinson
J. Robert Moore

CONSULTANTS

Harland Bartholomew
Russell H. Ritter

ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

Claire Avis
Robert A. Boudreux
Charles H. Bryant
John I. Coker, III
Malcolm C. Drummond
Stanley Dolacki
Thompson A. Dyke
Charles A. Fransman
Robert D. Grossman
Joseph W. Guyton
Wajih K. Kassam
Daniel W. Moore
Joseph M. Rose
Edward D. Schipmann
Ronald D. Schmid
Alan R. Siff
Billy G. Simon
James W. Yarbrough

**City Council and
City Planning Commission
City of Rockport, Texas**

Gentlemen:

In accordance with our agreement with the City of Rockport and the Texas Department of Health, we are pleased to submit the following final report on the Comprehensive Plan.

This report includes all major planning elements: economic base, population, land use, traffic and thoroughfares, the central area, public buildings, public utilities, parks and recreation, regulatory measures, a capital improvement program and suggested measures for administration of the plan. Drainage and recreation facilities identified in the plan may provide an important stimulus to development in the community. Rockport, as a resort center, holds the promise for continuing economic advances and growth. Projects such as these will enhance the environment and improve living conditions.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of all public officials, the staff of the city, and the numerous private citizens who have assisted in the preparation of this report. Our particular thanks go to the members of the Advisory Committees who reviewed our tentative and preliminary reports and made material contributions to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES

Eldridge Lovelace
Eldridge Lovelace
Partner-in-Charge

Robert D. Grossman

Robert D. Grossman
Associate Partner
Planner-in-Charge

PLANNING COMMITTEES

Economic Background and Population

R. L. Eckman, Chairman
R. W. Moore
Charlie Garrett
Wanda Sparks
Charles Roe, Jr.
Rudy Nava

Dr. H. F. Elliot
Don Meek
William Brown, Jr.
Alice Hilyard
Joel Mixon

Land Use and Control Measures

H. T. Bailey, Jr., Chairman
Mrs. J. W. Harden
Herman Johnson
Pat Greene
Marcelino Ramirez
McWesley Ledbetter
Jerri Ledbetter

Raymond Owens
Joe Browne, Jr.
Ed Harper
John Lewis
Lola Bonner
Tom Rogers

Transportation and Central Business District

J. H. Sorenson, Jr., Chairman
Judge Wendell
Matt Scott
N. F. Jackson
John Mitchell
Noah Taylor
Andy Anderson
Carl Duckworth

H. R. Kline
Hillis Dominguez
J. W. Hunt
R. D. Mosier, Jr.
Bob Eschberger

Advisory Members:
T. Noah Smith, Jr.
Robert P. Wallace

Community Facilities

Tommy Griffith, Chairman
Seth Steele
Joe Zambrano
W. B. Allen
M. W. Cochran
Juanita Wagley
John Ross
Mrs. James Bracht

J. D. Gray
Lon Starke
Cecil Lang
Tom Shults
Harold Picton
Vernon Kleypas
Sam Wilcox

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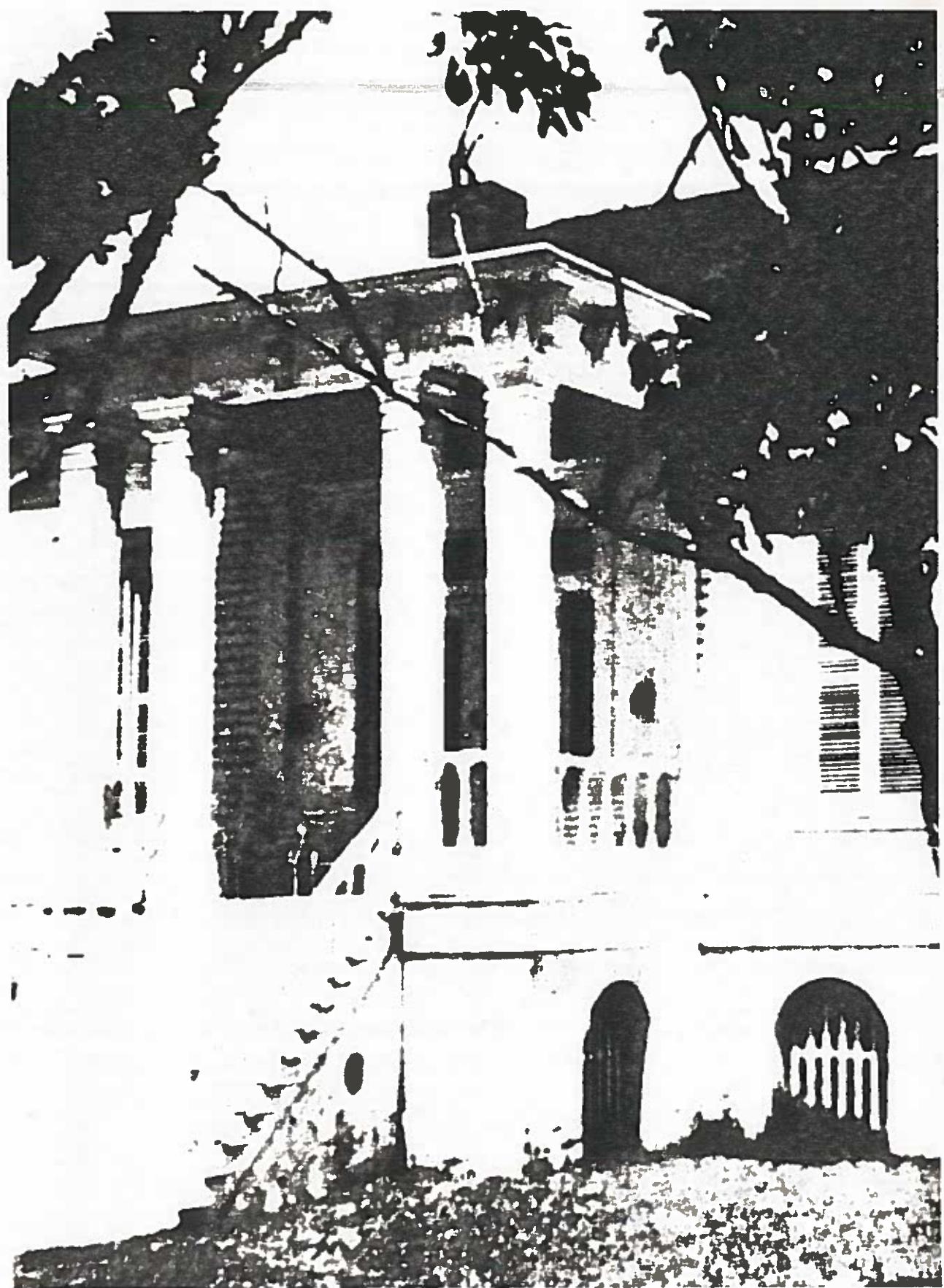
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HISTORIC HOMES REFLECT THE RICH TRADITION, ECONOMY
AND CLIMATE OF THE SOUTH TEXAS GULF COAST

INTRODUCTION

The preparation, adoption, and implementation of a comprehensive plan for the City of Rockport is a major local undertaking. Basic economic aspects of the Rockport area indicate a most favorable future growth potential. The ability of local residents to capitalize on this potential will determine the character and extent of future growth. Recent expansion in the tourist-resort economy and new industrial development indicates substantial growth will occur. The undertaking of a comprehensive planning program recognizes the potential which exists and reflects local concern for the future.

The plan is designed to accomplish fundamental goals and objectives which deal with the physical, economic and social changes which are anticipated. The comprehensive plan consists of a series of interrelated plans which deal with the physical aspects of the future city. The land use plan provides a basic framework for the future city, showing the optimum arrangement of residential, commercial, industrial, and public and semi-public areas. Other elements of the comprehensive plan are related to land use and population density.

One hundred years ago, the nation was predominantly rural, but gradually the American population became concentrated in urban centers. Recently, this process has been more rapid in Texas than in other states, and the state now has more designated metropolitan areas than any state in the Union. Corpus Christi, as the metropolitan center in the Coastal Bend Region, has increased from approximately 5,000 persons in 1890 to more than 200,000 persons in 1968. Rockport, on the edge of this rapidly growing metropolitan area, is the center of a major recreation area and can anticipate an increasingly larger share of growth attracted into the metropolitan area.

The blessings of urbanization can be mixed unless there is a plan to guide and direct growth. Symptoms of undesirable urban conditions are found in Rockport, even though it is a relatively small community. Much of the area surrounding the city was platted and sold in lots long before there was a need for them, and because of fragmented ownership growth in these areas has been retarded. Problem housing areas were created prior to the adoption of good standards for construction. Scenic areas more suited for park and recreational use have been lost to other uses. The central business district is both unattractive and inefficient. In many ways, the city reflects earlier standards which are no longer adequate to meet current local needs.

Rockport need not continue to grow in a casual and haphazard manner. It is within the power of the community to determine what its future will be. Toward this end, the city has formed a Planning Commission which has, as a major responsibility, the duty to administer subdivision and zoning control measures. With the adoption and the implementation of the comprehensive plan, the city, its elected public officials and appointed commissioners, will have basic guidelines required to direct private and public development within the community and its surrounding area.

The work of the Coastal Bend Regional Planning Commission in the preparation of a long-range plan for the 12-county region is of great value to the preparation of the Rockport Plan. Rockport's plan is developed upon and coordinated with the regional plan. It is based upon existing conditions, the potential for economic expansion and full utilization of the city's extraordinary physical setting.

Scope of the Planning Program

There are six major elements in the Comprehensive Plan for Rockport. These elements include the land use plan, based upon an evaluation of existing land use, economic base studies, and population forecasts; the thoroughfare plan, based upon an evaluation of highways and major streets and future facilities required to serve the growing community; the downtown business district plan, based upon an analysis of land use and conditions of structures in the downtown area and estimated facilities required to stabilize the business district as the heart of the city; the community facilities plan based upon an analysis of public buildings, public utilities, and parks and recreation facilities; a capital improvement program identified from an analysis of existing financial resources and an identification of project priorities; and suggested regulations required to effectively administer the plan. The planning area includes the City of Rockport and all lands within five miles of the present city limits. The period covered by the plan is between now and 1990.

Background for the Plan – The Rockport Area

Rockport is the county seat of Aransas County and is located on Aransas Bay, about 30 miles north of Corpus Christi. The city is situated on Live Oak Peninsula between Aransas and Copano Bays. Aransas Bay is separated from the Gulf of Mexico by St. Joseph's Island which is about four miles offshore. Victoria and Houston, major urban centers to the north, are 60 and 180 miles away, respectively. The Rockport planning area is in the northeast portion of the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Area. (See Plate 1.)

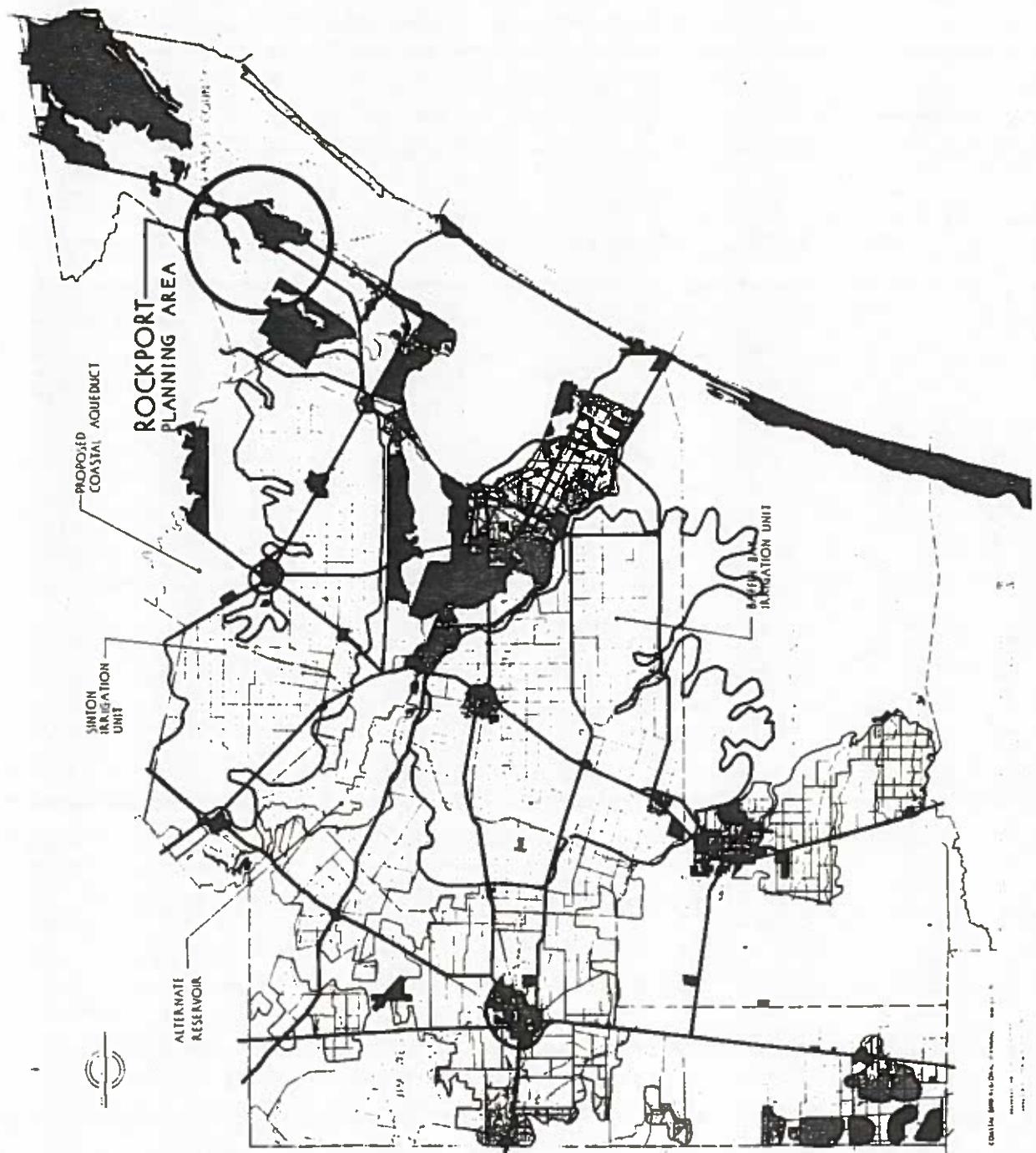
Climate

The city is located on the humid coastal plains of south Texas. Rainfall averages over 33 inches but is not uniform, reaching a maximum level in September. Prevailing southeast winds from the Gulf of Mexico for much of the year provide cool breezes in the summer and a temperate winter climate. Temperatures are predominantly warm with a moderate mean minimum of 48 degrees and a mean maximum of 92 degrees. This provides a long growing season for the area of 312 days a year. The moderate coastal climate attracts numerous winter visitors and is a feature which has made the area a tourist-resort destination.

Topography and Vegetation

The Rockport area is flat to rolling with alternating marsh and salt grass prairies and low Live Oak forests. Elevations reach a maximum of about 25 feet in the study area. Coastal areas are low with frequent marshes and tidal flats. Live Oak trees,

CORPUS CHRISTI
METROPOLITAN AREA



which give the peninsula its name, grow to a large size. Bent and twisted by the gulf winds, these trees provide a unique and attractive setting for the area surrounding the community.

Soils

Prevailing soil conditions are sandy, made up of the Galveston and Nueces types, which are prone to erosion. These loose sandy soils are composed largely of the disintegrated shell and sand. Barrier islands offshore, formed by wave and wind action, are also composed of sand and shell with a sparse covering of coastal grass and other salt tolerant vegetation. Soil composition in the Rockport area has limited agricultural activity, and the flat topography creates major drainage problems.

Wildlife

Many types of wildlife have found Aransas County and the Coastal Tidal Areas an ideal habitat. Because of its location on the main North American Migratory Flyway, many species of birds winter along the bays and inlets. Deer, javelina, wild turkey, and a wide variety of birds and mammals are common to the area. The 60,000 acre Aransas National Wildlife Refuge has been established to protect the nesting grounds of America's last surviving flock of Whooping Cranes.

Transportation

State Highway 35 is the most important transportation artery in the Rockport area, entering the county at Aransas Pass to the south and proceeding north through Rockport and Fulton (an unincorporated community to the north of the city). The highway crosses Copano Bay on an elevated causeway and extends northward to Port Lavaca, Bay City and Houston. Farm-to-market Road 881 connects Rockport with San Patricio County to the south and west.

Three miles north of the city, the Aransas County airport provides three 4,500-foot landing strips. Hangar facilities, a beacon, and services are available at the airport. The airport does not have scheduled commercial air service. At some future time, this facility has the capacity to serve small commercial aircraft. Today, the airport serves private planes, many owned by tourists and visitors who find it convenient to fly into the resort area.

Bus service in Rockport is provided by Continental Trailways System. It is possible to travel to both Corpus Christi and Houston by bus and onto destinations throughout the nation.

Live Oak Peninsula is located adjacent to the Intra-coastal Canal which connects major port areas along the gulf coast. The Intra-coastal Canal provides access to the sheltered coastal waters for drilling rigs, barges, and boats being operated along the coast. In addition to this, four commercial harbors are operated by the Aransas County Navigation District.

The community enjoys major transportation facilities on land, water and by air. In addition to facilities located in the immediate area, the city is also conveniently located to the interstate highway system at Corpus Christi and the commercial air services found at Corpus Christi International Airport.



FISHING IN ARANSAS COUNTY IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE BASIC ECONOMY SERVING BOTH COMMERCIAL AND RESORT NEEDS

ECONOMIC BASE STUDY

No community is a self-contained economic unit. Rockport exists because it provides certain personal services, acts as a retail trading center, provides a labor force, and manufactures goods for persons living both inside and outside the community. Much of the local economy is based upon services and goods which are sold to tourists who come to the community to enjoy the climate, coastal waters, and sports activities. The tourist economy has created a demand for services which have resulted in the establishment of major motel operations, restaurants, and a wide variety of small retail outlets which cater to the needs of the tourists.

The city also has a substantial manufacturing industry which produces fishing boats which are sold throughout the world. Because of the extraordinary features of these vessels, they have been widely used in the gulf coast area and in the waters of the southern Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This industry has become a major source of outside dollars in the local economy. The fishing industry also provides major employment opportunities on the fishing boats and fish processing operations. Large quantities of fish are shipped from Rockport each year.

Employment in the community can be divided into two categories. "Basic" employment consists of producing goods and providing facilities and services for persons living outside the community. Jobs in the basic sector of the economy attract dollars from outside the community which are then circulated within the community's economic cycle. "Secondary" employment consists of providing goods or services to the local community. Jobs in the secondary sector result from economic activities generated in the basic sector. Many occupation categories can be classified as being either basic or secondary. The manufacturer of fishing vessels for consumption outside the community would be an example of a basic industry as are motels and hotels which cater to the needs of outside tourists. Services of doctors or dentists are almost entirely consumed within the community, and these would be classified as secondary employment. Some occupational categories, many in the retail area, will be divided between the basic and secondary sectors.

As a part of the plan, it is important to determine what the future growth prospects appear to be and to anticipate the extent of future growth. Population growth occurs at a proportionate rate to increases in economic activity. Since a major sector of the local economy is based upon the tourist and resort industry, there will be a large segment of the local population which will be in residence for only a portion of the year.

Because it is part of an economic unit much larger than the community itself, Rockport is influenced by forces beyond its boundaries. Trends in economic and population growth throughout the Coastal Bend Region and other parts of the country have influenced the economic cycle in the community. This does not mean that the city must wait for outside influences to shape its destiny. An understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of the relative competitive position of the community and its major assets is fundamental to establishing the framework for a planning program which focuses on growth opportunities in the next 25 years.

The Early Economy and Long-Range Prospects

The economic history of Rockport has been strongly affected by the unique geographical situation of the city. Founded in 1867, Rockport became a shipping point for cattle, hides and tallow. Export of products by sea was an alternate method to the overland trail drives to Kansas, where eastern markets could be supplied with meat and cattle products. The early town declined as a transfer point after the railroad pushed into the cattle country. Railroads reached Rockport in 1886, resulting in a real estate and resort boom. The attractions of climate, the seaside location, abundance of wildlife and game, and the unique environment were immediately recognized as major assets. Since World War I, tourism has been supplemented by fishing and shipbuilding as primary sectors of the local economy. These activities have prospered because of the unusual geographical setting and valuable natural assets of the city.

In looking to the future, Rockport should chart a course of action, designed to take advantage of available resources: natural, geographic, human, and economic. In many respects, the city is unique. It is one of the relatively few Texas communities located near the Gulf of Mexico, protected by the barrier islands, yet having relatively quick access to the waters of the Gulf. In addition to this, large population centers located nearby and the attractive climate will play an important role in the future of the community. Future employment and income will be strongly based upon these factors as increasing amounts of leisure time stimulate tourists and recreational activities. Deficiencies identified in the community can be overcome by the cooperative action of local citizens directed toward capitalizing by its numerous natural assets.

The Present Economy

An evaluation of the local economy has been prepared from various sources. Due to the relatively small urban population within the corporate limits of Rockport, reliance has been placed on Aransas County data rather than statistics for the city itself, since the economy of the county and city are so closely linked together.

Employment

Texas Employment Commission statistics show the labor force has expanded by 500 persons since 1961 to a total of 2,900 persons in 1968. Increases in employment have all occurred in the non-agricultural sector, with growth in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing employment. (See Table 1.) In 1967, each employed person in the county was supporting a total of 3.4 dependents. This is based on the estimated population of 10,000 persons for the county at that time. Nationally, about 40 percent of the population is in the labor force. Aransas County has only 30 percent of the population employed. This can be explained by the fact that there is a large concentration of individuals in the retired category and many are too young to be in the labor force.

Declines in farm and ranching employment follow the national pattern of concentrating into fewer and larger units. Although manufacturing employment has

Table 1

EMPLOYMENT – ARANSAS COUNTY

	<u>Labor Force</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Total Employed</u>	<u>Manufacturing</u>	<u>Non-Manufacturing</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>
1961	2,365	180	2,185	215	1,855	115
1963	2,535	150	2,385	235	1,925	225
1965	2,370	120	2,250	230	1,920	100
1967	2,900	60	2,840	370	2,390	80

Source: Texas Employment Commission – 1968.

Table 2

MAJOR BUSINESS EMPLOYERS

Caspany and Wendell	120
Jackson Seafood Company (Seasonal)	25/55
Johnson Fish Company	35
L. E. Casterline Fish Company (Fulton)	50
Picton Lumber Company	20
Rockcrete Products Company	11
Rockport Yacht and Supply Company	141
Tenneco Gas Company	14
United Carbon (Kosmos)	135
Wagley Lumber Company	<u>34</u>
TOTAL	585/615

Source: Coastal Bend Regional Planning Commission
Interviews with employers: 1967.

risen 75 percent since 1961, it is still a relatively small part of the employment picture. While manufacturing is a growing segment of the Texas economy (16.3 percent), it has played a relatively minor role in Aransas County where the current figure is 9.5 percent. New manufacturing employment opportunities may attract residents to the county who are employed in the Corpus Christi metropolitan area.

The local economy in 1960 was dominated by a non-agricultural, non-manufacturing employment pattern. This is still the situation today. Approximately one-third of the labor force is "white collar", well below the 41 percent state average. The employment pattern reflects slow, steady growth. With the exception of declines in agricultural employment, all other categories have shown gradual increases. Major employers are shown on Table 2.

Since 1960, there has been a steady decline in unemployment from about eight percent to slightly more than two percent. This is well below both the state and national averages. In 1960, unemployment was concentrated in the blue collar categories. An adequately trained and well educated work force is the best insurance against an upswing in the unemployment rate.

Determining basic and secondary employment was accomplished in consultation with local individuals familiar with economic activities and from an analysis of economic information. Each job supports an additional 3.4 residents. Each new job in the basic category will support one job in the secondary category. This means that each job established in the basic sector will mean a total population increase of approximately seven persons.

Manufacturing

Rockport Yacht and Supply Company, with a total employment of 141 persons, is the largest manufacturing employer. (See Table 2.) This firm's fishing trawlers are sold throughout the United States and abroad. This industry is an excellent example of the kind of economic generating force which can be attracted into the community. Long-range prospects for growth in the manufacturing category do not appear to be bright at this time. The county's labor force is too small to attract labor intensive industries and the location of Rockport holds advantages only to those industries attracted by the resources of the area.

Many communities are seeking new industries, but the likelihood of attracting a large manufacturing industry into the county is about one to ten against. At the same time, competitive forces directed toward attracting industries into the Corpus Christi area will continue to place Aransas County in a relatively non-competitive position. As industries are attracted into the metropolitan area, some of the available labor force in Aransas County may find employment opportunities nearby. Long-range growth in the manufacturing sector may be a prospect as waterfront locations in the metropolitan sector become scarce.

Commercial Fisheries

Rockport has become an important base for commercial fishing operations in the various inland bays as well as the Gulf of Mexico. Fish landings have nearly

doubled in the last five years, from 1.3 million pounds to 2.0 million pounds, with a total value increase from \$263,711 to \$491,185.

In the region, the important fin-fish catches include Drum, Trout, Flounder and Sheepshead fish. Shellfish category includes crabs, oysters, and shrimp. Rockport is fortunate in having more varied fishing available than is the case elsewhere on the Texas coast. Oysters have become relatively difficult to find in south Texas because of silting conditions in the inland waters and in some instances, high salinity.

In recent years there has been an upward trend in commercial fishing activities. One advantage is that there has been less pollution of local waters than in areas to the north. The major pollution problem facing Rockport fishermen is high salinity caused by oil field brine which is discharged as a part of mineral production activities.

Mineral Resources

In 1965, value of minerals produced totaled \$10.5 million. Employment in this sector of the economy amounts to about eight percent of the county total. In recent years, the size of payroll, value of shipments, and number of employees have increased substantially.

The most important minerals produced are natural gas, petroleum, distillates, and shell. Oil and gas production in the area is concentrated in fields north of Rockport in the Fulton and West Fulton areas (extending into Copano Bay) and on the north peninsula. Expansion and development in the oil industry are now concentrated in offshore locations. This is a favorable situation for Rockport because of convenient access to offshore production areas. Oil production, in relative terms, is slowing even with increasing production. Gas production, however, should continue to expand. Aransas County produced 21.9 million cubic feet of natural gas in 1965.

Agriculture

Soils limitations necessitate careful conservation practices for agricultural use. The marginal character of farming activities in Aransas County is reflected in the statistics of the Department of Agriculture which show that land area in farms is decreasing, causing the size of farms to increase and that the value of farm products in 1964 was one-third of 1959. Much of the present farming and ranching activity are located in the northern and western portions of the county.

Tourism, Recreation and Retirement

Since the 1890's, tourism and recreation have played an important role in the economy of Rockport and Aransas County. Early land promotions, following the opening of the railroad, led to the construction of several resort hotels. The protected setting on the gulf coast with the cool offshore breezes, beaches, hunting and fishing attracted tourists then, as these assets do today. A recent survey of

tourists and recreation areas, conducted by the Coastal Bend Regional Planning Commission, identified the three most important attractions in the region as: fishing and hunting, climate, and swimming and water sports.

The Rockport-Fulton area was identified as one of the major tourist destinations in the region. The Regional Recreation Survey identified 32 major motel operations with a total of 575 rooms. While many of these are relatively small new motels, a full range of recreational accommodations have recently been built. Marinas and park areas, both state and local, comprise the most important public recreation facilities. Marinas at Little Bay Harbor, Key Allegro and Fulton represent nearly one-third of all marinas in the Coastal Bend Region.

The importance of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is shown in attendance increases, from 24,000 persons in 1963 to almost 40,000 persons in 1967. This increase is at a rate somewhat greater than other intensively used parks operated by the Department of the Interior. The non-manufacturing sector in the local economy reflects the increasing emphasis on tourism.

Most winter vacationers in Rockport come from Texas and the Midwest. Last year, 354 visitors registered with the Chamber of Commerce with most coming from Minnesota, followed by Texas and Iowa. Winter visitors stay longer than summer vacationers. Most summer visitors come from Texas.

Retirement is also becoming an increasingly important aspect of the local economy. Current statistics which clearly identify the number of retirees are not available but will be shown in the 1970 census. In addition to retirement, the vacation home market in Rockport has shown major increases in recent years. Recent lot sales and construction of homes in the several new waterfront subdivisions have demonstrated clearly the market for improved resort areas adjacent to the attractive coastal waters. Increasing leisure time and numbers of individuals entering the retired category will add to the impact of retirement and second home residents.

Retail, Wholesale and Selected Services

All of the money earned in Rockport which is available for consumer goods is not spent in the county. On the other hand, some money spent inside the county comes from other areas. The tourist sector of the economy contributes significantly to retail trade volume, particularly in the consumption of food and purchase of small necessities. Statistics published by the Bureau of the Census indicate that between 1958 and 1963 the total number of retail establishments decreased from 122 to 106. At the same time, the volume of sales was increasing from about \$6 million per year to \$7.5 million. Since 1963, significant increases will be measured, both in terms of the number of establishments and the volume of sales. This information will be available in the 1968 Census of Business.

Retail sales in the county reached nearly \$8.8 million according to estimates prepared by Sales Management's *Survey of Buying Power, 1967*. An evaluation of

retail sales clearly illustrates the competitive position of the community in a large metropolitan area and the strong emphasis on tourism and recreation.

Wholesale trade increased substantially between 1958 and 1963, from 4.1 million to 6.5 million dollars. At the same time, a new wholesale establishment was added. Receipts per establishment increased from about \$31,000 to \$46,000. Despite this increase of about 50 percent, receipts per establishment were less than half the Texas average of approximately \$100,000. This indicates considerable value added growth potential for existing operations.

The selected services segment of the economy provides basic services in the community. In 1963, there were 163 persons occupied in selected service jobs. Hotels and motels accounted for 50 percent and personal services 20 percent. The remaining 30 percent were divided between repairs, amusement and miscellaneous services.

Family Income

Per capita family income in Aransas County is below both the state and national averages. Current estimates of families with earnings below \$3,000 per year indicate that since 1960 this percentage has reduced from 34.6 to 30.9 percent. This income figure is almost one-third greater than the national average.

At the same time, those families with incomes greater than \$10,000 are substantially below the state and nation. Retail sales statistics are explained in part by the income distribution pattern. Many of the jobs available in Rockport are not high paying positions due to the fact that a heavy reliance is on the service and non-manufacturing category as opposed to salaries in more industrialized communities. As tourism and recreation gain importance in the region and the economic cycle increases the need for tourist accommodations, these facilities will tend to create more jobs in the service categories which, with the proper facilities, can stimulate changes in the pattern of income distribution.

Summary

The following is the summary of the primary factors which have influenced Rockport's economy in the past and which will affect its future development potential.

1. Rockport's economy has been strongly influenced by its geographical location, natural assets of climate, mineral and wildlife resources.
2. Manufacturing has played a relatively minor role in the economic development of the city. As a result, most employment is found in the non-manufacturing sector and this is expected to continue throughout the planning period. Some light industrial activities primarily associated with marine services have a good potential because of the city's site advantages.

3. Commercial fishing, oil and gas production, other resource exploiting industries and activities associated and related activities will continue to play an important part in the economy of the city.
4. Tourism represents perhaps the best opportunity for continuing growth. In addition to tourism, the attractiveness of the area as a retirement center will also have a significant impact. Standards of development and facilities provided will largely influence the ability of the city to capitalize on these growth prospects.
5. As an economic satellite of Corpus Christi, the city will continue to receive the benefits of the larger community without many of the associated problems. Wholesale and retail activity will be reduced by the competitive facilities in the larger city. At the same time, however, retail sales and services operating within the tourist economy should continue to expand.

The Future Economy

Long-range growth prospects in Rockport and Aransas County will be determined to some extent by national trends and changing standards. Long-range growth projections for the Corpus Christi metropolitan area indicate that in the next 50 year period the metropolitan population surrounding Corpus Christi Bay will likely attain a level of 1.2 million persons. A substantial portion of this growth in economic activity and population may be attracted to satellite locations, particularly if the proper type of facilities and amenities are provided. With a higher standard of living, vacation travel and recreation activities are certain to become more important. In industry, new regional plant locations are being developed on large suburban sites. The lack of deep water facilities will tend to reduce this kind of activity in Aransas County; however, with the advent of large-scale water desalination facilities, atomic power, and other technological advances, dramatic changes can be forecast for the city. In order to best take advantage of projected growth in the region and metropolitan area, Rockport residents need to have a basic understanding of its present assets and weaknesses.

Assets

1. Attractive geographical setting, ideally situated to capitalize on tourist and recreational advantages. The proper utilization of these assets can establish Rockport as one of the major tourist destinations on the south Texas Coast.
2. An attractive natural environment in the city and its environs. This environment is largely the result of the very attractive combination of natural vegetation and the waters of Aransas Bay.

3. A good employment picture which is reasonably well insulated against temporary fluctuations in the economy.
4. A satellite location in a large metropolitan area which offers a large diversification of additional employment opportunities with close proximity to the city itself.
5. A steady increase in population in the metropolitan area will continue to attract growth to Rockport and its surrounding area. To do this, adequate standards for the development of residential areas need to be enforced and provision of public facilities will need to be implemented.

Weaknesses

1. An unattractive urban center with many marginal structures of questionable value. Deteriorating conditions in the central business district have made the central commercial function vulnerable to the establishment of outlying shopping centers.
2. A large portion of the population now lives near or below poverty levels. In addition to this, there is a relatively low level of educational achievement in the county. Limited education and low income usually go hand-in-hand.
3. The off-center location has tended to reduce industrial expansion, but at the same time, has offered benefits for the development of tourism and recreation. Additional industrial development is estimated to have a limited short-range impact on the community.
4. Early land speculation has contributed to a pattern of fragmented land ownership in areas surrounding the city. This has caused a haphazard growth process and in some areas has constituted a barrier to the economical growth of the city.
5. There appears to be an overall lack of awareness of the problems facing the community and at the same time opportunities which are available are also not widely understood. This can be attributed to an absence of community-wide goals and objectives.

Understanding these assets and weaknesses can offer the community an opportunity to act boldly, to take advantage of existing assets and to minimize weaknesses. The central business district can be upgraded to make it more attractive to vacationers and tourists. Provisions can be made to establish adequate standards and control measures which can regulate development in new growth areas. Deterioration in outlying portions of the community can be corrected through incisive public action directed toward upgrading the character and physical

environment of the city. The comprehensive plan is based upon utilization of these assets. To accomplish goals and objectives, residents of the community must understand what can be done and how it can be accomplished to benefit the city and its residents.

Goals and Objectives

Goals of the planning program are greater than the plan itself. Continuing appraisals, new ideas and ways to wisely use opportunities for the benefit of the community are a vital part of the on-going planning process. The goals of the community should be:

1. To Plan for the physical, economic, and social growth and development of the community, keeping the plan up-to-date and current with changing conditions.
2. To Coordinate local planning activities and projects with other improvements in the county, metropolitan area, region, and state.
3. To Implement the plan through careful administration of control measures, construction of specific improvement projects, and wise use of available financial and human resources.

Objectives for the planning program are also greater than the plan since they embody short and long-range improvements which will have a major impact on the quality of the community. These objectives are embraced by proposals in the plan and must be broadened as the plan is modified to reflect current needs. The objectives of the community are:

1. To achieve an efficient, desirable and lasting relationship between people and the use of land.
2. To provide adequate means for transportation in urban areas, the larger community and region.
3. To secure a safe standard of health through the construction of adequate utilities: water, sewer and storm drainage facilities.
4. To maintain a decent, safe and sanitary quality of housing for all inhabitants.
5. To achieve a high standard of community facilities: schools, parks and recreational areas, suitable to serve local residents and visitors alike.
6. To stimulate economic expansion, using all assets to the benefit of local residents.

7. To accomplish basic social objectives insuring the opportunity for all people to lead healthy, satisfying, and meaningful lives.

POPULATION

Since 1900, the Rockport population has increased from 1,153 to 3,800 persons. At the same time, Aransas County has increased from about 1,700 persons to about 10,000 in 1967. The growth pattern of the city has been slow, but fairly consistent. Only in 1930 did the city suffer a loss of population from the preceding decade, but the county increased slightly. These losses occurred during the depression period when much of the speculative land promotions were being carried on in the county. Aransas Pass, with a portion of the community in Aransas County, has experienced a steady growth since 1910. (See Table 3.)

Since 1930, the city has shown a steady increase in population, averaging a 31 percent increase each decennial period since 1940. Current population estimates indicate that in 1967 the city had approximately 3,800 persons, nearly a 40 percent increase over the 1960 figure. A considerable amount of this growth has occurred through the annexation of new growth areas. Since 1940, the county has increased each decennial period by approximately 50 percent. A substantial amount of this urban development has occurred in the Fulton area and west of Rockport in unincorporated areas. Population in the planning area is estimated at 8,800 persons. (See Table 3.)

Table 3
POPULATION COMPARISON

	<u>Rockport</u>	<u>Aransas County</u>	<u>Aransas Pass</u>	<u>San Patricio County</u>
1900	1,153	1,716	—	2,372
1910	1,382	2,106	1,197	7,307
1920	1,545	(2,064)	1,569	11,386
1930	(1,140)	2,219	2,482	23,836
1940	1,729	3,469	4,095	28,871
1950	2,266	4,252	5,396	35,842
1960	2,989	7,006	6,956	45,021
1967*	3,800	10,000	7,300	50,000

*Coastal Bend Regional Planning Commission — 1967.

Source: U.S. Census of Population

Population age distribution shows a slightly higher percentage in the under five and over 65 categories than was true for the state or nation. The 1960 Census figures also indicated that approximately 50 percent of the total population was under age 25.

Existing population densities are not illustrated because of cyclical variations with a substantial increase in the summer months. At the present time, population densities are calculated at between 800 and 1,000 persons per square mile in the planning area. In Rockport, population density now reaches about 1,300 persons per square mile.

Projections

Population forecasts prepared as a part of the Coastal Bend Regional Plan indicate that by the end of the planning period the population of the county should reach approximately 25,000 persons. The population in Rockport is estimated to have a potential for increasing from 3,800 persons in 1967 to approximately 18,000 persons by 1990. Much of these population increases will occur through annexations to the west and north. The following comparison summarizes population forecasts:

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1990</u>
County	10,000	25,000
Planning Area	8,800	20,000
Rockport	3,800	18,000

Density of population should vary between 1,200 and 1,300 persons per square mile. Seasonal fluctuations in population will primarily occur in the tourist-resort areas. Coastal areas will contain nearly all of the resort facilities and will attain highest population density levels in the summer months.

Near the end of the planning period, it is estimated that the population in Aransas County and the interchange of the labor force between Aransas County and the Corpus Christi Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area will qualify Aransas County to become a part of the metropolitan area.

LAND USE PLAN

In Rockport, as in other cities, the location of residential, commercial, industrial and public areas reflects the arrangement and function of the city. (See Plate 2.) The overall arrangement of land uses is fairly compact along the Coastal areas. Today, there is a continuous urban area from Rockport to north of Fulton. The use of these shoreline areas indicates the primary function and purpose of the urban areas. Commercial functions are also associated with the existing urban development and are primarily located along U.S. Highway 35 as it traverses the peninsula.

Industrial activities are associated with the water areas where the various fishing fleets dock in the several harbors along the coastline. Heavy construction activity, servicing operations for offshore oil rigs, and the construction of fishing boats, are the major industrial activities in the community. Almost all of the industrial activities are located along the Coastal areas. In some instances, industrial uses are directly associated with tourism and recreation features and there are some areas of conflict.

Public and semi-public lands include schools, parks, and similar public facilities. These are located throughout the planning area. Little Bay Park and beach and the Aransas County Airport, located north of Fulton, are the largest public land areas in the planning area. The inland areas are utilized for ranching and grazing activities to the largest extent. At the north end of the peninsula, the inland areas are situated on the Fulton oil field, which extends some distance into Copano Bay. Major mineral extraction activities occur in this part of the county and raw materials produced are exported through pipelines.

Land Use Study

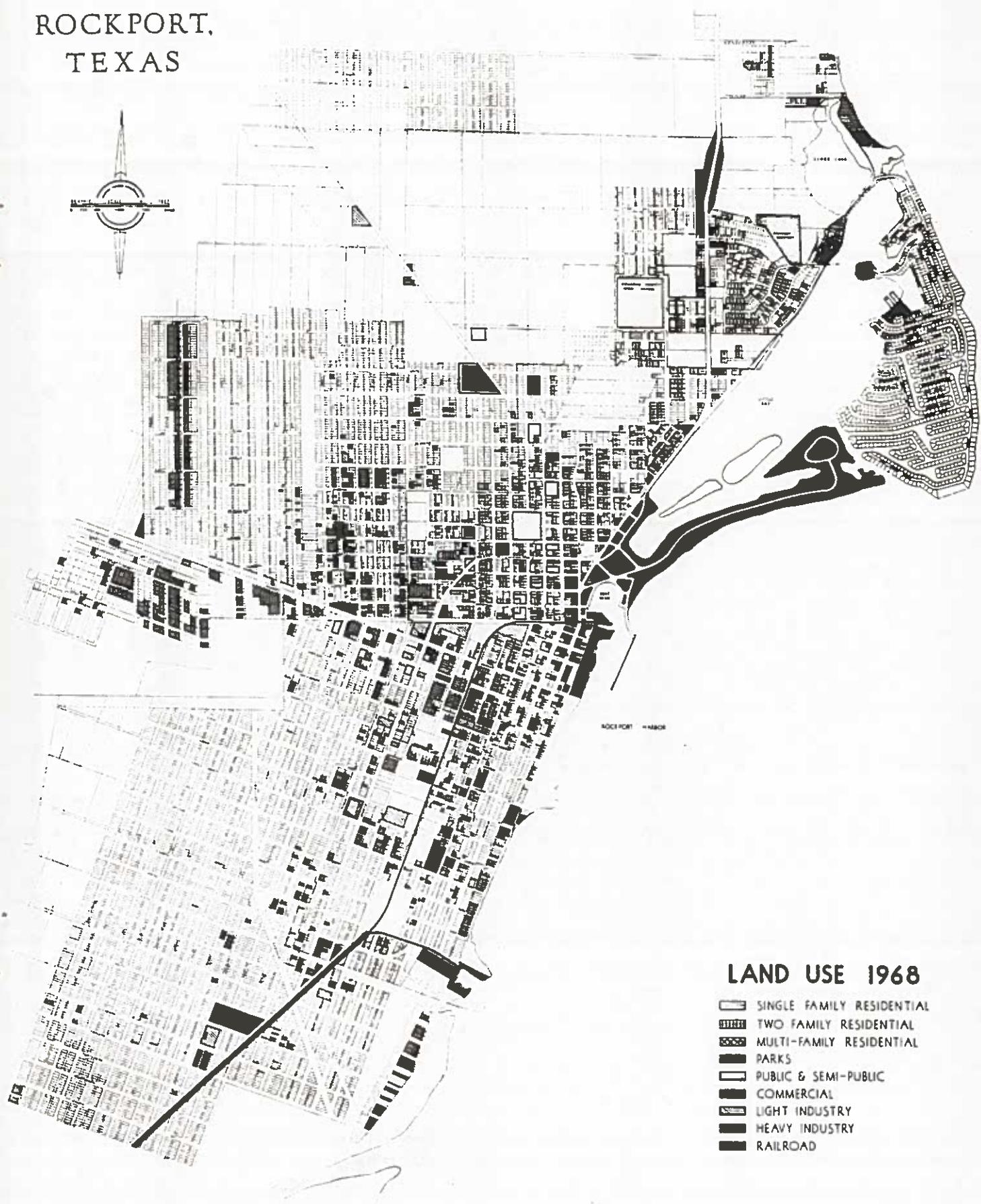
The detailed land use survey made in Rockport and the surrounding areas, in March of 1968, included all lands within five miles of the corporate limits. The total study area included 30,000 acres. All land uses were identified and detailed computations were prepared. (See Table 4.)

Land Use Areas

Due to the extensive amount of land promotion which has occurred in the county, the largest single land use category is found in streets and roads. This includes all of the platted roads dedicated as public rights-of-way. Single-family residential uses are the next largest category and this is followed by public and semi-public lands, including the sizable area utilized for the Aransas County Airport and the park areas at Little Bay.

Details of the land use study were tabulated for the Rockport city limits, Rockport and its environs (an area extending inland for approximately three miles), and for the planning area. Each comparison is inclusive of the one before. In each of the comparisons, the number of acres used per 100 persons has been indicated.

ROCKPORT, TEXAS



LAND USE 1968

- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- TWO FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- PARKS
- PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
- COMMERCIAL
- LIGHT INDUSTRY
- HEAVY INDUSTRY
- RAILROAD

Table 4
EXISTING AND ESTIMATED FUTURE LAND USE
Rockport, Texas

Land Use Categories	Rockport City Limits 1968 Population 3,800		Rockport and Environs 1968 Population 5,000	
	Acres	Acres Per 100 Persons	Acres	Acres Per 100 Persons
Single-Family	210.0	5.52	409.7	8.20
Two-Family	2.6	0.06	2.8	0.06
Multiple-Family	2.2	0.05	3.0	0.06
Trailers	5.7	0.15	18.3	0.36
RESIDENCE	220.5	5.78	433.8	8.68
COMMERCE	43.2	1.13	74.6	1.49
Light Industry	24.5	0.64	32.5	0.65
Heavy Industry	16.9	0.44	27.7	0.55
Railroads	8.9	0.23	19.8	0.40
INDUSTRY	50.3	1.31	80.0	1.60
Parks	78.1	2.05	84.9	1.70
Public and Semi-Public	19.7	0.51	69.5	1.39
Streets and Roads	386.1	10.16	1,397.7	27.95
PUBLIC	483.9	12.72	1,552.1	31.04
DEVELOPED AREA	797.9	20.94	2,140.5	42.81
UNDEVELOPED AREA	1,092.1	28.73	4,462.4	89.24
TOTAL AREA	1,890.0	48.67	6,602.9	132.05

Land Use Categories	Planning Area 1968* Population 8,800			Planning Area 1990 Estimated Population 20,000		
	Acres	Acres Per 100 Persons	Percent of Developed Area	Acres	Acres Per 100 Persons	Acres to be Added
Single-Family	780.9	8.87	19.9	1,600.0	8.00	819.1
Two-Family	2.8	0.03	0.1	10.0	0.05	7.2
Multiple-Family	4.3	0.05	0.1	100.0	0.50	95.7
Trailers	18.3	0.21	0.5	70.0	0.35	51.7
RESIDENCE	806.3	9.16	20.6	1,780.0	8.90	973.7
COMMERCE	163.6	1.86	4.2	600.0	3.00	436.4
Light Industry	44.6	0.51	1.1	120.0	0.60	75.4
Heavy Industry	62.4	0.71	1.6	180.0	0.90	117.6
Railroads	19.8	0.22	0.5	30.0	0.15	10.2
INDUSTRY	126.8	1.44	3.2	330.0	1.65	203.2
Parks	85.6	0.97	2.2	800.0	4.00	714.4
Public and Semi-Public	626.9	7.12	16.0	1,200.0	6.00	573.1
Streets and Roads	2,104.6	23.92	53.8	3,000.0	15.00	895.4
PUBLIC	2,817.1	32.01	72.0	5,000.0	25.00	2,182.9
DEVELOPED AREA	3,913.8	44.47	100.0	7,710.0	38.55	3,796.2
UNDEVELOPED AREA	25,454.6	289.30		21,658.4	108.29	
TOTAL AREA	29,368.4	333.77		29,368.4	146.84	

*Includes Corporate Limits.

These are based on calculations of the present population within the city, adjacent to the city, and for the planning area. Population figures used in this analysis are: City of Rockport, 3,800 persons; Rockport and environs, 5,000 persons; and the planning area, 8,800 persons.

In evaluating the land use information shown on Table 4, it is apparent that the amount of land required to accommodate urban uses is much more efficiently utilized within the city limits where approximately 21 acres are required for each 100 persons. In the environs of the city this figure more than doubles to 42.8 acres per 100 persons, and in the planning area the figure is even greater, at approximately 45 acres per 100 persons. Most of this increase is found in roads. With a considerable amount of the development outside the city only seasonally occupied, it is evident that a significantly larger public investment is required to maintain streets and roads to serve land uses which are occupied only infrequently.

At this time, there are approximately 800 acres used within the city limits for urban purposes. About one-fourth of this area is used for residential activities: single-family, two-family, multiple-family homes and trailers. About 60 percent of the total developed area is used for public and semi-public areas, with fully one-half of the urban area devoted to streets, roads, highways, and public easements. Industrial activities and commercial areas each account for approximately five percent of the developed area. This unusually high degree of land utilized for public access has occurred because of the numerous streets and roads which have been platted, but have not been utilized or developed. (See Plate 2.) In the surrounding areas of the city, primarily to the southwest and northwest, the land use map shows that substantial areas have been dedicated but not utilized. These areas constitute a rather serious liability to the community and to residents of the county.

Within the city itself, the urban areas are closely associated with State Route 35 and other major streets. The primary urban areas are adjacent to the coastal areas. Even within the developed portions of the community, however, there are substantial open spaces and to a large extent this creates problems in the community for the extension of public services and utilities. As urbanization continues in the city and its environs, a considerable amount of "filling in" should take place.

Environmental Conditions

In some portions of the city the physical characteristics of urban development have retarded growth. The land use study indicates those structures which were classified as requiring major improvements or as being substandard (below established standards for construction). Buildings classified as substandard were visibly deteriorated, having sagging roofs, broken or leaning walls, poor foundations and the like. Blighted conditions of this nature, when uncontrolled, can spread and affect large areas of the city.

The land use study identified 1,265 dwellings in the corporate area, of which 257 (20 percent) were substandard. In the immediate environs, the area covered in Plate 2, there were 2,145 dwellings and 389 (18 percent) were substandard. Enforcement of the building code and adoption of a Minimum Standard Housing

Ordinance would do much to upgrade housing conditions in the problem areas found in the north and west central areas of the city.

The Planning Area

The land use study indicated that a little more than 10 percent of the total planning area is now used for urban purposes. (See Plate 3.) Approximately 25 percent of all developed lands are used for residential purposes. Most of the residential uses are single-family homes. Two-family and multiple-family uses are not common types of residential housing. A substantial number of trailers were identified in the study. Commercial activities account for approximately five percent of all development in the planning area. Most of these activities are located on Highway 35 in a sequence of areas from Cove Harbor to north of Fulton. The strongest concentration of commercial activities is found in the central business district. This commercial center suffers from poor organization and poor condition of structures. Fragmentation of commercial activities into various sections of the city has had an overall tendency to weaken this function, and as a result, no dominant commercial area has been developed.

Early urbanization through the platting and sale of large land areas has resulted in severe problems of poor urban design, excessive street rights-of-way and fragmented land ownership. Lands adjacent to and within the city need to be replatted and made available for suitable urban purposes.

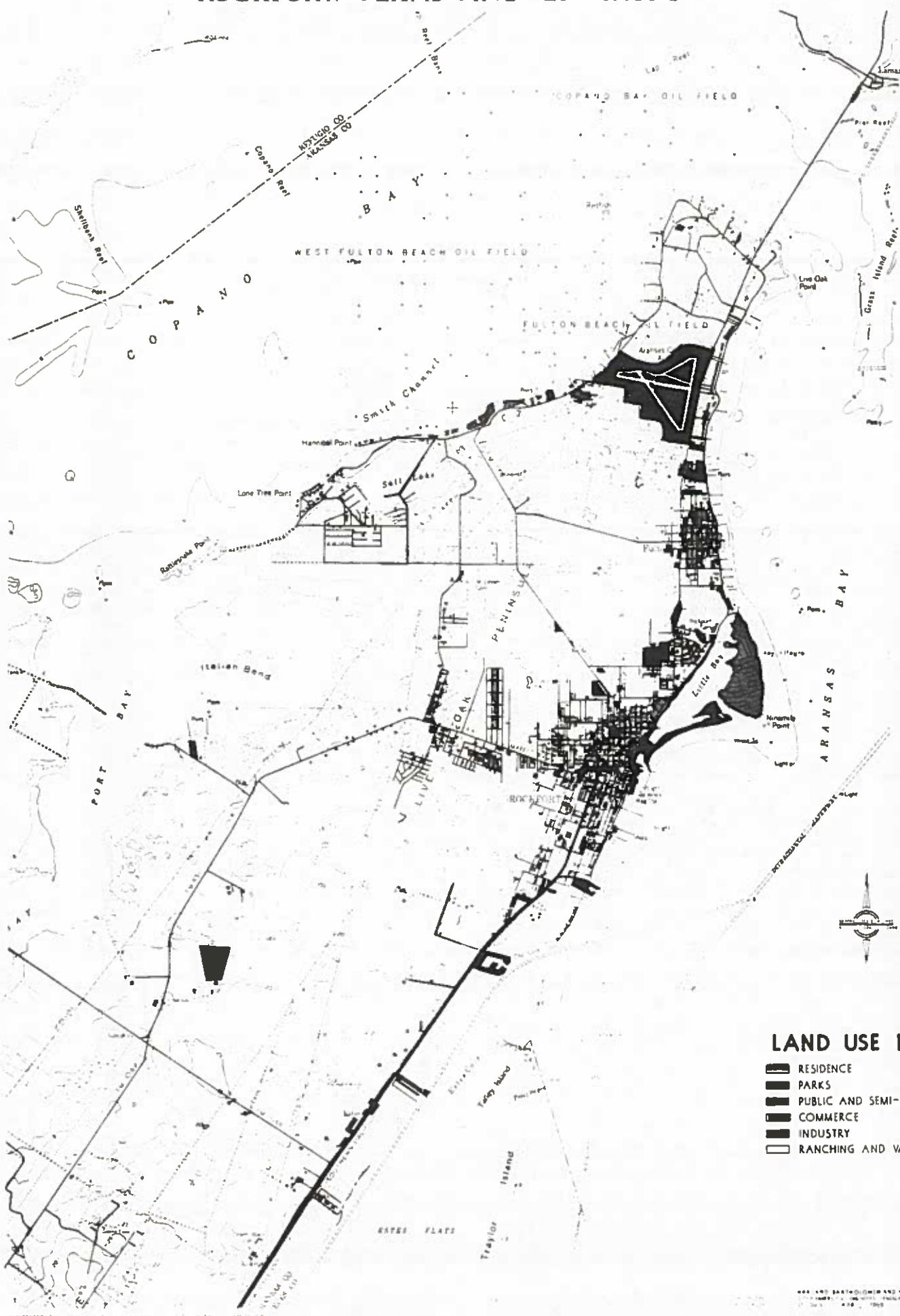
Industrial activities are primarily of the heavy industrial type. These include the major shipyards, industrial service centers, and the harbors on the peninsula. To some extent, industrial activities are in conflict with the tourist and resort industry. These conflicts have been minimized by the grouping of industrial activities into three major concentrations inside the city and to the south. Industrial areas constitute about four percent of the total planning area.

Public and semi-public uses are widely scattered; however, major concentrations occur near the center of the urban area where the Little Bay recreational facilities have been provided. Schools and parks are located throughout the urban area in the various neighborhoods. To the north, the Aransas County Airport constitutes the largest single public use area in the county. This attractive site adjacent to Highway 35 is well situated with water areas to the east and west, largely eliminating conflicts between urban development and approach zones at the airport. Public and semi-public uses constitute about 72 percent, almost three-fourths of the total developed area identified in the study. Parks account for slightly over two percent. Public and semi-public uses account for 16 percent and streets, roads and highways over 53 percent of the total developed area. (See Table 4.) Only about one-half of the platted streets and roads are developed.

Summary

The land use study for the Rockport planning area indicates that the character of urban development has established a relatively inefficient urban pattern which extends for a distance of approximately six miles along the coastline. In the central

ROCKPORT, TEXAS AND ENVIRONS



LAND USE 1968

- RESIDENCE
- PARKS
- PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC
- COMMERCE
- INDUSTRY
- RANCHING AND VACANT

portion of the peninsula, new residential subdivisions have been developed in recent years. These subdivisions are widely separated from city services. To the north, along Copano Bay, substantial resort development has occurred with homes only occupied seasonally. Long-range problems faced by the community, may be solved if a substantial amount of future growth is developed in accordance with an overall plan. Such a plan should anticipate future growth areas, identify difficulties which will be encountered and proposed basic public facilities such as major streets, highways, water, sewer facilities, and drainage improvements.

The Land Use Plan

Functional relationships between uses and activities in the urbanizing portions of the Rockport planning area are indicated on the land use plan. The plan proposes a pattern of development which would enable the community to capitalize on its major economic aspects and at the same time to solve problems such as limited major street routes and poorly drained inland areas. With the establishment of well defined neighborhoods, a pattern of major streets is proposed and community facilities such as schools, parks, and utility systems are designed to serve new growth areas.

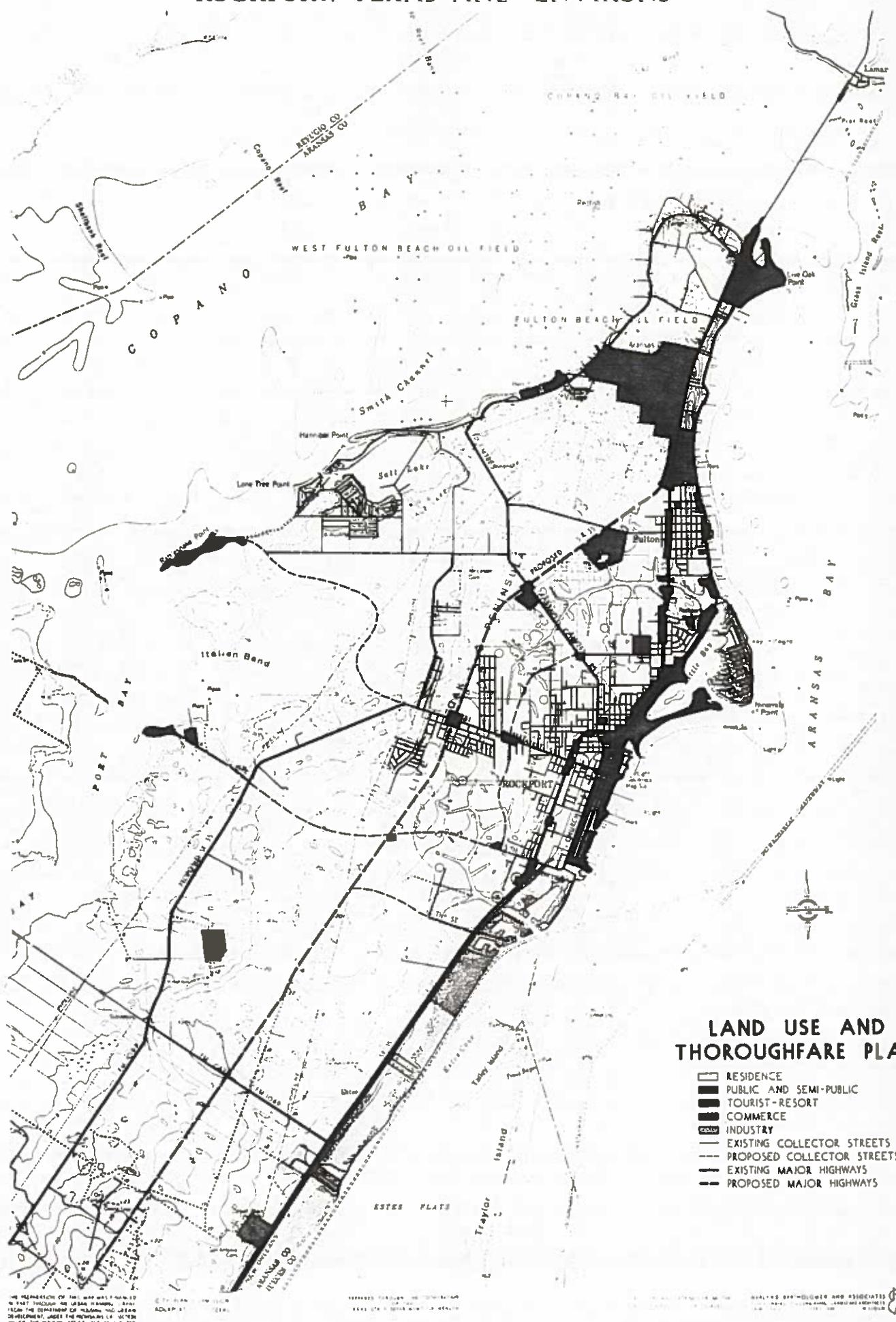
Land Use Areas

Based upon long-range population forecasts and the land use study and analysis, estimates of the future amount of land required by the end of the planning period were prepared. A factor analysis of the amount of land used for each 100 persons in 1968 was used in preparing these estimates. (See Table 4.) In general terms, the trend analysis indicated that the amount of land required to serve residential uses would decrease slightly during the planning period as a more compact urban pattern develops. Since the type of development which has occurred in the Rockport area has been relatively spacious, the trend analysis indicates that slightly less than nine acres would be used to accommodate each 100 persons. This is substantially greater than the amount of land which would be required to accommodate 100 persons in a city the size of Corpus Christi, for example, where long-range estimates indicate that only five acres would be required for each 100 persons. Forecasts indicate that in the planning period there will be increasing emphasis on multiple-family housing and trailers. Inspite of this trend, the single-family residential category will remain dominant. A total land area of almost 1,800 acres will be required to serve the 1990 population.

Commercial uses are expected to increase substantially as the tourist-recreation industry gains in importance. At the present time, a little more than one acre per 100 persons is required to serve the commercial needs of the city. In the planning area, the current ratio is almost two acres per 100 persons. The long-range forecasts indicate that approximately three acres per 100 persons will be needed by 1990, requiring approximately 600 acres within the planning area.

Industrial areas would increase slightly over the 1968 figures, maintaining approximately the present ratio of acres per 100 persons found in the Rockport environs analysis. The long-range estimates indicate that about 1.65 acres would be

ROCKPORT, TEXAS AND ENVIRONS



LAND USE AND THOROUGHFARE PLAN

- RESIDENCE
- PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC
- TOURIST-RESORT
- COMMERCE
- INDUSTRY
- EXISTING COLLECTOR STREETS
- PROPOSED COLLECTOR STREETS
- EXISTING MAJOR HIGHWAYS
- PROPOSED MAJOR HIGHWAYS

required for each 100 persons, and this would mean a total of approximately 330 acres in industrial use. Most of this expansion will occur in the light and heavy industrial categories with the addition of slightly more heavy industrial lands during the planning period. Most of the land areas are estimated to be needed in waterfront locations near Cove Harbor. Railroads should serve new industrial areas south of the existing city limits. Rail service north of the proposed south drainage channel would be terminated with railroad yards serving the Cove Harbor area.

Public use areas will continue to account for the greatest proportion of all land use areas. The need for parks and recreation facilities during the planning period will require substantial new investments in these facilities. At the present time, there are approximately two acres of park land for each 100 persons. With the addition of several major new park areas and expansion of existing sites, including a new golf course, the present acres per 100 persons would double by the year 1990. By the end of the planning period, there should be approximately 800 acres in park areas. These lands would serve both the needs of existing residents and would accommodate the numerous tourists coming into the area. Investments of this nature are as important as new streets and roads.

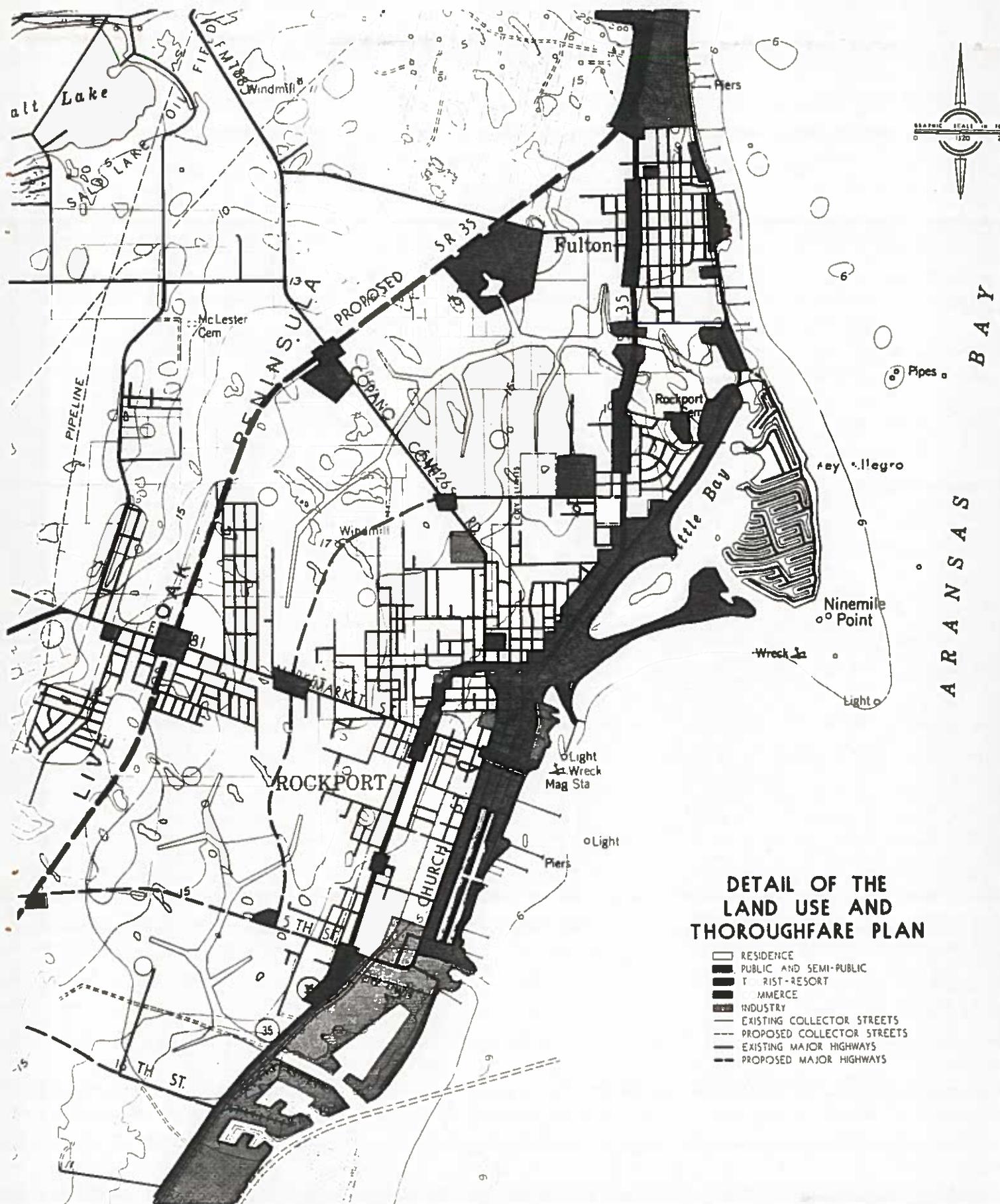
Public and semi-public areas would include special purpose areas needed to serve the community. This would include scenic easements, open spaces, the addition of protected areas for wildlife and such uses as the Aransas County Airport. Highways, streets, and roads will likely remain the major land use category during the planning period. The overall amount of land required to accommodate these facilities would, however, decrease to approximately 15 acres for each 100 persons. By the year 1990, public lands would amount to approximately 25 acres for each 100 persons. (See Table 4.) Proposed land use areas are shown on Plate 4.

The developed area is estimated to expand to about 7,700 acres by 1990. This would be an overall average of about 38.5 acres for each 100 persons. Much of these increases are estimated to be required in the public sector for roadways, drainage facilities, water sports areas and park lands. By the end of the planning period, 25 percent of the planning area will be utilized for urban purposes.

Density of population is anticipated to be between 1,200 and 1,300 persons per square mile. Seasonal fluctuations in population will have a major impact on density, particularly in the tourist resort district and in residential areas along the coast.

Details of the Plan

One of the major considerations in the plan is involved with major transportation facilities in the planning area. State Highway 35 at the present time crosses the Copano Causeway and extends southward touching the western portion of the Fulton area and then passing through Rockport on the way south to Aransas Pass. The plan proposes to move the alignment of Highway 35 into the central portion of the peninsula for all weather access. (See Plates 4 and 5.) This new alignment would extend westward from the present highway just south of the Sanddollar Motel north of Fulton. This change in the traffic pattern would enable



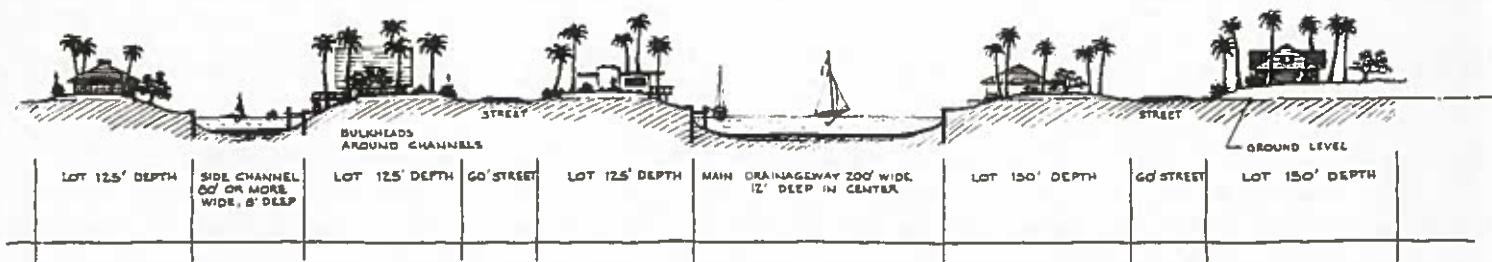
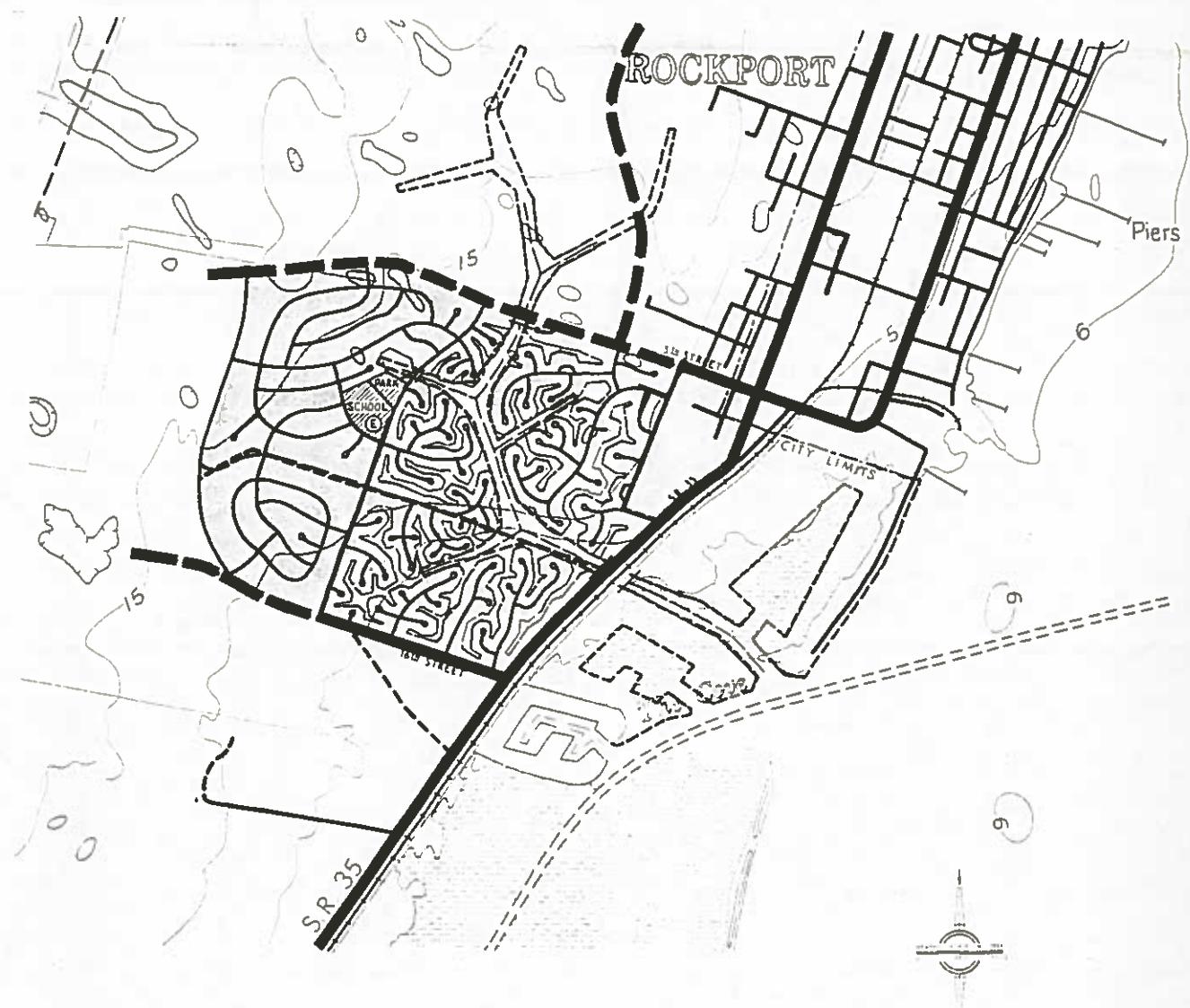
the coastal areas to be less encumbered with through traffic movements. It would also provide a more direct access from the larger urban centers in San Patricio and Nueces Counties to destinations north of Aransas County. Present alignment of State Route 35 would remain as an alternate route connecting with Aransas Pass, Port Aransas and Padre Island. The coastal portion of this highway would then become utilized primarily for internal circulation within the community and as a scenic route along the coastal areas of the southern portion of Aransas County. The scenic portion of this route would become a part of the Hug-The-Coast Highway System as well as the Texas Tropical Trail.

With slightly more than 7,500 acres anticipated to be needed for urban purposes by 1990, the plan identifies those areas which should come into urban development by the end of the planning period. Residential uses would be the largest single land use category with residential areas extending westward from the coastline to the proposed new alignment of State Route 35. Much of these land areas will be suitable for residential use once satisfactory drainage provisions are made.

Drainage Facilities. The plan proposes to extend two large channels to provide drainage and water access into interior areas. (See Plate 6.) These channels would serve a dual purpose as major drainageways, allowing runoff waters to reach water level without passing through developed portions of the surrounding area. These channels would also permit boat access and recreational advantages for surrounding urbanizing areas. The plan proposes to extend the north channel west from Canoe Lake, then south around the northwest portion of the city, terminating approximately one-half mile north of Market Street. The south channel would enter the peninsula just north of Cove Harbor. This channel would extend west and north, terminating approximately one-half mile south of Market Street. The land use plan identifies only the major channels in this system. Off of the main channels, a series of local channels into subdivisions and properties could be developed solving at the same time serious drainage problems in these surrounding areas and, in effect, increasing the water frontage now found on the peninsula by about one-half.

Existing platted subdivisions in these areas would have to be replatted to accommodate such an improvement. Main channels would pass through land areas with elevations of up to 15 feet above water level. These channels would be from 100 to 200 feet wide with major openings at points of intersection. This inland waterway system would accommodate pleasure craft, sailing vessels, and would provide major new inland water areas which could be used for recreational activities within the future neighborhoods. Proper sloping, bulkheading, and preservation of existing vegetation would be an important aspect of such an improvement. Low-lying marsh areas would be raised with spoil materials extracted from these channels. This method of disposing of the spoil would also serve to correct existing drainage deficiencies. In those areas where waterfront developments might take place, a substantially greater portion of the total land mass would be required for public access facilities. This simply means that in addition to streets, these subdivisions would also have public easements dedicated for drainageways and water access.

SKETCH OF SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD



In the South Austin and Magnolia Streets area a proposed drainage improvement would correct existing problems and create new waterfront properties. This would be accomplished by dredging channels on Lamar Street to the rear lot lines between Austin and Magnolia and Magnolia and Live Oak Streets. Street right-of-ways would be narrowed to 60 feet and channels dredged to 80 feet. The Lamar channel proposal would create more than two miles of waterfront lots and correct existing drainage problems. This improvement would be coordinated with drainage improvements in the downtown area. (See Plate 7.)

Land Use Areas. Residential land areas shown on the plan account for approximately 4,000 acres. Within the residential areas shown on the plan, there would be also a substantial amount of open space where some vacancy of land development is anticipated. Generally, the plan shows a large surrounding residential area with primary access provided by the major road system and the large new channel system to the north and south.

Tourist and resort facilities are major elements in the plan, principally located in coastal areas and adjacent to the major intersections of the proposed channel system and major street system. Tourist resort areas should be protected by a new zoning district. This district would permit motels, hotels, and related tourist functions, such as restaurants and service facilities. Apartments and trailer parks would also be found in this area. The plan proposes a tourist resort area extending a distance of approximately five miles from the south channel to the central portion of the Little Bay Cove. North of Fulton, a similar resort area is identified in the plan.

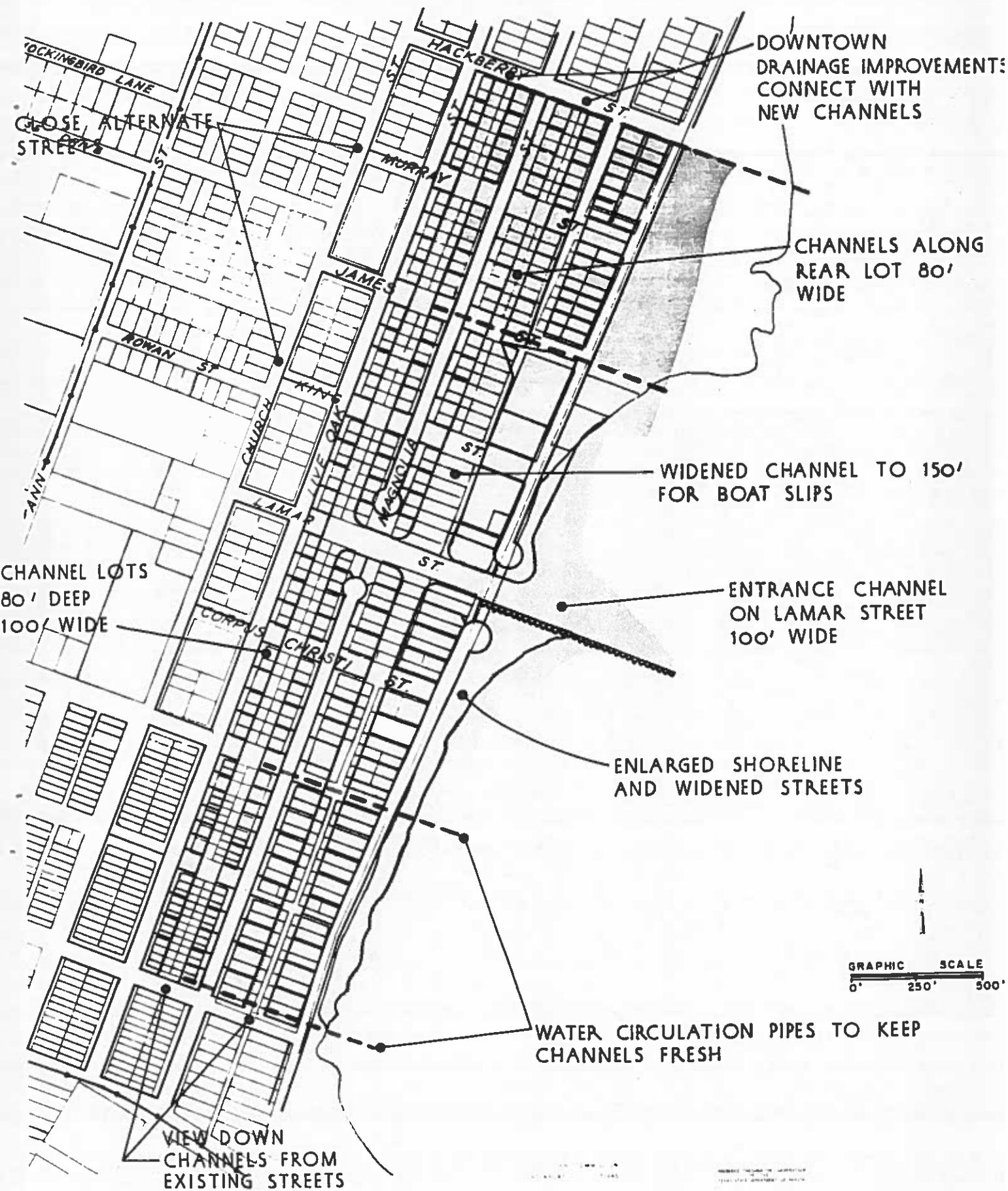
Commercial areas would largely reflect the existing concentration of facilities along the major highways in the community. In addition to this, a major revitalization program would permit the central business district to again become the hub of commercial activities in the community. To stabilize this area as the commercial center, major new investments in public facilities would be required. Near the end of the planning period, at least one major new shopping center would be envisioned as a part of the overall planning program and this would take place in the central portion of the region associated with one of the major highways and would likely be located somewhere near the intersection of the new alignment of U.S. 35 and the present alignment of FM 2165. Neighborhood commercial areas are also shown at the major intersections of the road system.

Replatting

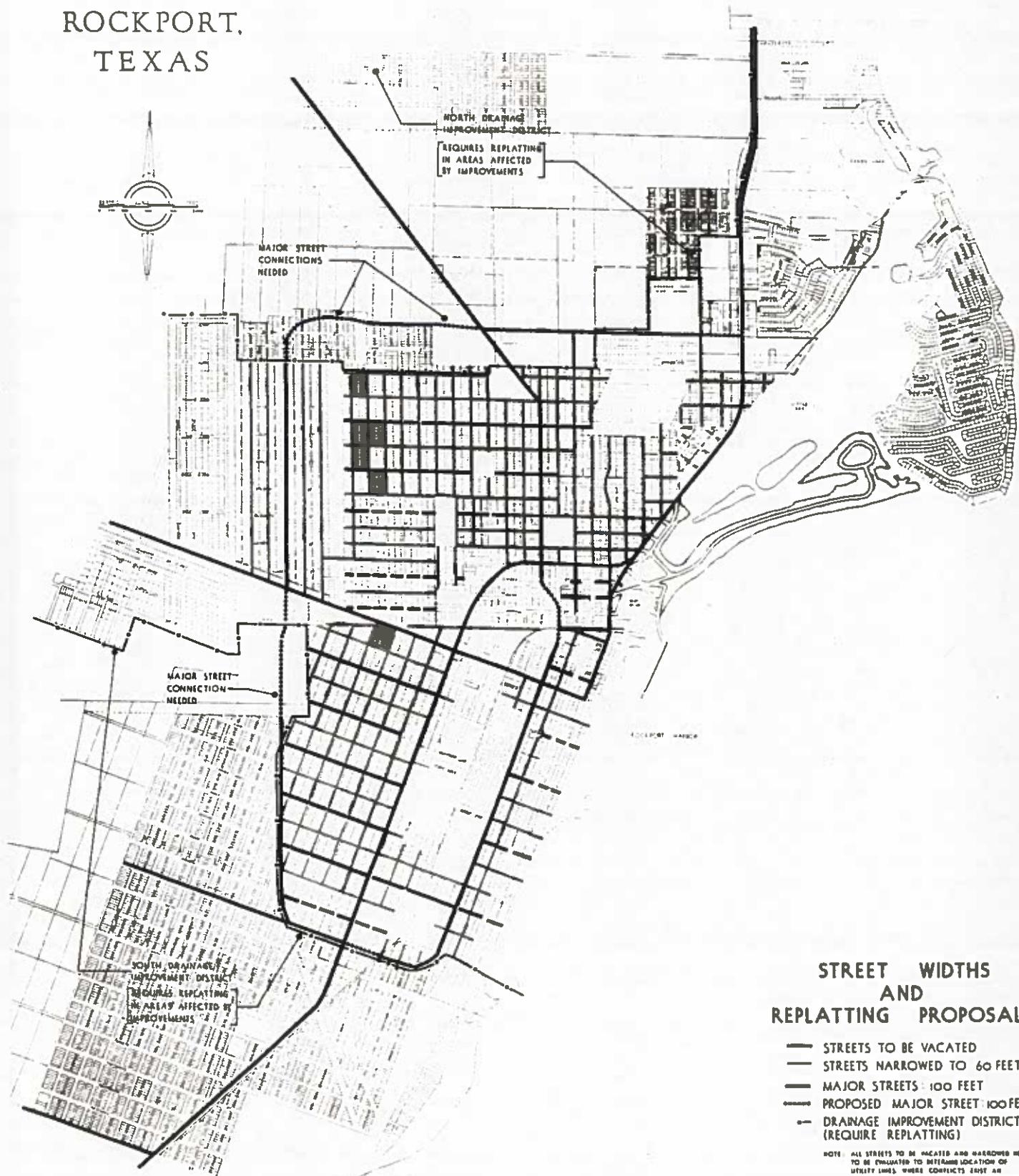
Early land development promotions have left the city and county with inherited liabilities of large land areas with excessive streets. The city and county have adopted new minimum standards for major (100 feet wide) and minor streets (60 feet wide). In some areas these early subdivisions were designed with streets at 300 foot intervals. Today neither the city nor the county can afford to provide adequately maintained streets and roads with this frequency of distance.

With today's fragmented land ownership pattern in these older subdivisions, there is little opportunity for replatting. But the city and county do have the power

LAMAR CHANNELS PROPOSAL DRAINAGE AND WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT



ROCKPORT,
TEXAS



STREET WIDTHS
AND
REPLATTING PROPOSALS

- STREETS TO BE VACATED
- STREETS NARROWED TO 60 FEET
- MAJOR STREETS: 100 FEET
- PROPOSED MAJOR STREET: 100 FEET
- DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (REQUIRE REPLATTING)

NOTE: ALL STREETS TO BE VACATED AND NARROWED NEED TO BE EVALUATED TO DETERMINE LOCATION OF UTILITY LINES. WHERE CONFLICTS EXIST AN ENGINEERING STUDY SHOULD DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF AREAS TO BE NARROWED OR VACATED.

to vacate streets and narrow rights-of-ways which are excessively wide. Recommendations for closing streets and narrowing the width of rights-of-way are shown on Plate 8. Streets recommended for closing or narrowing should be replatted in accordance with this plan after all easement needs for utilities are checked.

Drainage improvement areas will require the replatting of large land areas. This should be accomplished by direct purchase (possibly through condemnation) of all land areas where subdivision land sales have resulted in fragmented ownership and no development. As drainage improvements are completed, a portion of the costs (a benefit assessment) should be applied to lands enhanced by improved drainage conditions, gaining the opportunity for waterfront development, and attending recreation benefits.

THE THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Good transportation facilities are an essential part of modern living. Residents of the urban environment depend heavily upon major streets and thoroughfares which provide for the efficient movement of vehicles, goods and people. This system should not only be adequate to serve present needs, but should also be designed in anticipation of future requirements of local residents and visitors to the community. If long-range needs can be anticipated, improvements can be programmed and constructed to eliminate congestion, inefficiency and waste. The thoroughfare plan is a vital element of the comprehensive plan. It provides for street and highway improvements which may be constructed as needs become apparent and as funds are available.

As new portions of the community are developed, subdivision standards may be applied which will adequately serve present and long-range needs. The major street system provides for adequate vehicular movements from one part of the community to another. The highway system serving the City of Rockport is an integral part of the thoroughfare plan. Between the various highways, a system of major streets will be necessary to provide for convenient movements within the community. Minor streets in the neighborhood should provide access to residential areas. The system of major streets and highways should also form logical boundaries between the neighborhoods. Land uses should be directly related to the major and minor street systems. Major streets serve more intensive land uses such as commercial and industrial areas. Minor streets serve less intensive uses such as residential areas.

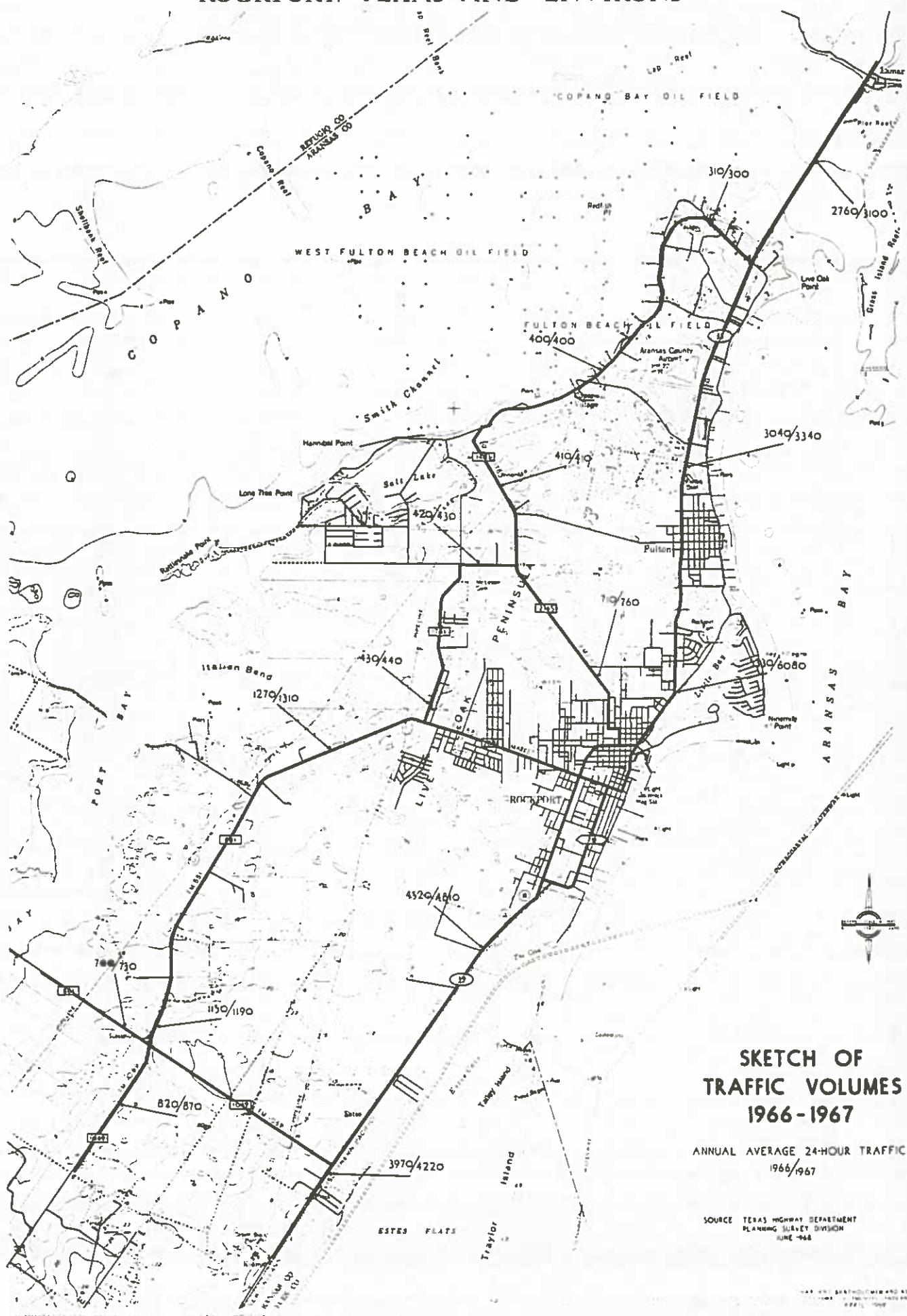
Existing Thoroughfares

State Route 35 and Loop Road 70 through the business district comprise the major components of the internal major street system. In addition to these highway facilities, Farm-to-Market Roads 881 and 2165 also provide access from the city to the interior portions of the peninsula. Within the planning area, two other farm-to-market roads are classified as part of the thoroughfare system. These include Route 1781 which serves the western portion of the peninsula and Route 1069 which connects with 881 and 35 to the south.

Average daily traffic volumes on State Route 35 range below 5,000 vehicles in the northern and southern portions of the peninsula. Inside the City of Rockport, traffic on State Route 35 reaches a level between 5,000 and 10,000 vehicles. Volumes on the farm-to-market road system are generally low, ranging from 2,000 vehicles per day on Routes 881 and 1069 and 1,000 vehicles per day on Routes 1781 and 2165. Route 1781 along Copano Bay in the northern portion of the peninsula now has the lowest traffic volumes on the county farm-to-market system, between 300 to 400 vehicles per day. (See Plate 9.)

Rights-of-way and pavement widths at the present time are adequate to serve existing traffic volumes. Rights-of-way on the farm-to-market system range between 80 and 100 feet. State Route 35, outside the central portion of the city, has a

ROCKPORT, TEXAS AND ENVIRONS



SKETCH OF
TRAFFIC VOLUMES
1966-1967

ANNUAL AVERAGE 24-HOUR TRAFFIC
1966/1967

SOURCE TEXAS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
PLANNING SUBJECT DIVISION
JUNE 1968

right-of-way of 100 feet. In the central city where Highway 35 traverses Bronte and Liberty Streets, the right-of-way is somewhat narrow (70 feet). Portions of Loop Road 70, on Church Street from First Street to Market Street, are constricted with a right-of-way of only 60 feet. Constricted areas should be widened to provide uniform major street widths. Limitations on Church Street led to the development of the State Highway on Liberty and Bronte Streets. Loop Road 70 has a constricted right-of-way from First Street to Market Street where pavement widths narrow to 60 feet. This should be widened to 100 feet.

Pavement widths on the state highway system follow current design standards with 12-foot lanes and paved shoulders throughout the planning area. In the central portion of the community, State Route 35 has been improved with median dividers and a parkway where Broadway, Liberty and Austin Streets come together. The open parkway system extends for approximately four blocks from Liberty Street to Lady Clare Street. This parkway is a part of the waterfront improvements along Little Bay Cove. Pavements on Loop Road 70 are of the same standard although shoulders along the route are not paved for much of the distance. In the central business district, Austin Street is the major north-south street extending from Market Street north and connecting with the Broadway improvements. In this portion of the city, the State Highway Department has recently enlarged the divider median and new street lights have been installed in the median.

Pavement widths on the farm-to-market road system reflect the current levels of traffic carried on these routes. Farm-to-Market Road 881 has adequate pavement widths and paved shoulders are provided for a portion of the way of the distance on Market Street. New improvements on Farm-to-Market Road 2165 have improved access in the northwestern portion of the planning area. The southern portion of Farm-to-Market Road 1781 is developed to a lower standard. The upper portions of Farm-to-Market Road 1781 are adequate to serve current needs. In the northern portion of the planning area, the county has provided a new road from Farm-to-Market Road 1781 to Fulton, a road across the southern portion of the county airport property, and an east-west road approximately a mile and a half to the north between Farm-to-Market Road 1781 and State Route 35. Each of these roads carries low volumes of traffic and current facilities are adequate to serve present needs.

Due to the low traffic volumes recorded in the traffic counts taken by the State Highway Department, no additional supplemental traffic counts were deemed necessary as a part of this study.

Right-of-way widths in the city range considerably from narrow streets in the older portions of the city to excessively wide streets in some subdivisions. Recommendations shown on Plate 8 indicate those areas where streets need to be narrowed or vacated. Pavement conditions on minor streets are generally poor with inadequate drainage. Once substantial drainage improvements are constructed, the city will be in a position to undertake major street construction projects. These should be completed as benefit assessment improvements.

In the central business district, the only major street improvements are found on Austin and Market Streets. Both Magnolia Street to the west and Water Street to

the east of Austin also serve as a part of the circulation system in the central business district. Each of these streets is developed to a low standard, having inadequate pavement widths, limited drainage facilities, and as a result, a limited service capability. Without question, these deficiencies need to be corrected so that the central portion of the community may play a vital role as the center of a thriving city.

Improvements to Magnolia, Live Oak, and Church Streets to the west and Water Street to the east will be required if the central portion of the city is to reverse the general deterioration trend. At least a portion of these costs should be assessed to benefiting properties.

Estimated Long-Range Needs

Population projections prepared for the 12-county Coastal Bend Region were correlated with vehicle registration projections based on trends identified for the nation, state and region. This study indicated that traffic volumes in 1966 had increased about 1.75 times the 1950 recorded volumes. Projections are based upon the economic analysis, estimated future population levels, and the trends in vehicle registration. In addition to this, in Aransas County, a factor was applied for increasing numbers of tourists which are to be an increasingly important part of the local economy. This study indicated that by 1990, State Route 35 is expected to have volumes approaching 20,000 vehicles per day as an annual average. With this route becoming a part of the proposed Hug-the-Coast Highway System, an increasing amount of through traffic will be using this coastal route. As traffic volumes begin to build up it will become increasingly important to separate through traffic movements from the local destination points, particularly in the built-up areas along Little Bay Cove and the outer edges of the central business district.

In coordination with the regional plan, the thoroughfare plan for Rockport proposes to relocate the main portion of State Route 35 into the central portion of the peninsula. The present location of this highway would be maintained as an alternate route, identified as a scenic highway providing direct access to the north end of Padre Island. All other portions of the thoroughfare system should have sufficient right-of-ways to enable them to be developed to a standard allowing two moving lanes in each direction with suitable provisions for drainage facilities, curbing or paved shoulders.

Details of the Plan

The proposed relocation of State Route 35 into the central portion of the peninsula is the single most important proposal in the thoroughfare plan. This will accomplish two important objectives: (1) to relieve through traffic movements from the central urbanizing portion of the peninsula, and (2) to provide more direct access for through traffic movements between the urban areas surrounding Corpus Christi Bay and destinations to the north. This proposed relocation, taking place from slightly north of Fulton, extends southwest across the peninsula and intersects with Farm-to-Market Road 881, about one and one-half miles west of the city limits.

Major access points into the city from this new route would be found on Fifth Street, Market Street, Copano Road, and the present alignment of State Route 35. In addition to linking the central urban area in the county with the major highway route, these roads would also extend into the western and northern portions of the county, providing access from areas expected to develop during the planning period. All farm-to-market roads should connect with other major portions of the major street system; new connections from Pearl to Church and on Market Street should be added to the system.

A new major north-south street, three-fourths of a mile west of the city limits, would be added to the thoroughfare system. Enterprise Street at the southern end of the Aransas County High School would be extended to the east to connect with the present alignment of State Route 35, and extended to the west to intersect with Copano Village Road. At this point, a major thoroughfare would be extended to the south, connecting with Market Street and Fifth Street. The extension of this road from Copano Village Road to Fifth Street would cover a distance of approximately three miles.

Sixteenth Street, ten blocks south of the present corporate limits, would be extended to the west intersecting with the new alignment of State Route 35. (See Plate 4.) Proposed major streets should become a part of new subdivisions and included in all plats for these areas.

Major thoroughfares establish boundaries of new neighborhoods to be developed as the city grows into the surrounding area. Between these major thoroughfares, a system of collector streets would link minor streets in the neighborhood with the major street system. Major drainage channels proposed in the southern and northern portions of the community would also act as boundaries between neighborhoods. Both the major thoroughfare system and important collector streets would provide access across these channels.

In the southern portion of the city, a sketch plan for the development of waterfront lots on a system of internal channels illustrates the manner in which collector streets and major streets work together to define the boundaries of the neighborhoods while permitting the most efficient use of these lands for residential development. Neighborhood, highway, and tourist-resort commercial facilities would be an integral part of these neighborhoods. The concept of the neighborhood school-park as the central neighborhood feature is also clearly illustrated. (See Plate 6.)

The thoroughfare plan is designed to accomplish objectives of convenient access and safety. This plan identifies needed major street improvements. Based on the plan, sufficient right-of-ways to accommodate required pavement widths can be set aside in advance of development. In the central business district, some modification of the present major street system is proposed to connect Pearl Street with Church Street in the vicinity of the proposed civic center. Details of the major street system are identified in the Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan, Plates 4 and 5. In addition to these improvements, substantial investments in land fill and bulkheads are proposed along Broadway adjacent to Little Bay. The expansion of the parkway

system, placement of bulkheads and necessary recreational facilities would be a part of major thoroughfare improvements in this portion of the city. Details of these proposals are contained in the parks and recreation plan.

Standards

In the planning period most of the major street and highway improvements will likely be accomplished with the assistance of the Texas Highway Department and Aransas County. Therefore, all standards for these portions of the thoroughfare system should conform to those standards currently in effect, as determined by the Texas Highway Department.

Minor street standards should be adopted to allow some flexibility for the level of improvements. For example, in those areas where storm sewer facilities are planned, in the central portion of the community, streets should have curbing and gutters to adequately drain the streets. Gradually all neighborhood streets, the minor street system, should be upgraded to conform to minimum standards as reflected in the Subdivision Ordinance: 28 foot wide pavements with curbs and gutters.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

Commercial activities in the central portion of the community constitute the major concentration of retail uses in the county. The central commercial area extends a distance of eight blocks from Liberty Street south to Market Street. Most of the commercial activities in the central area are concentrated on Austin Street. State Route 35 at the northern end of the business district has additional commercial facilities, primarily oriented toward highway traffic. The commercial center is somewhat spread out and fragmented, with numerous side streets entering from the east and west.

Existing Conditions and Character

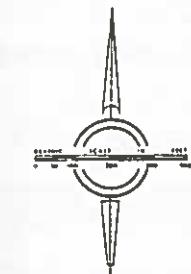
Loop Road 70 passes through the business district on Austin Street. This was the first alignment of State Route 35. While through traffic movements have been largely eliminated from the main shopping street, many businesses are still oriented to highway traffic. Limited parking, deterioration and vacant structures have resulted. A concentration of buildings in the southern portion of the central area is now vacant and badly deteriorated. Older residential areas surround the central business district. (See Plate 10.)

The business district extends for a distance of approximately three-quarters of a mile. To the north, newer retail establishments have acted to attract the center of retail activities to the northern portion of the business district. This has resulted in vacancies in the southern portion of the business district. Large gaps occur between buildings and this, coupled with the numerous intersecting streets, has spread the retail activities over a much larger area than would otherwise be necessary. The general character is poor and the lack of concentration definitely limits the effectiveness of the area as a commercial center. Shoppers coming into the area do not have an opportunity to park their vehicle and engage in shopping activities from one establishment to another. A trip into the central business district of Rockport requires that the shopper park and shop and then move the car to another location where additional shopping may take place.

The open character of the area and the lack of concentration are the two greatest deficiencies. These deficiencies, coupled with the deteriorated character of many of the buildings, places serious limitations on the functional characteristics of the central business district. Major improvements required to stabilize the area as a business center include closing streets, filling in the gaps between retail operations, providing adequate off-street parking facilities, and making major improvements in the visual character and attractiveness of the area.

The condition of structures in the central area was tabulated as a part of the background study. In the eight block area from Magnolia Street to the waterfront, building conditions were tabulated for the 117 structures in the area, showing:

CENTRAL AREA
ROCKPORT, TEXAS



BUILDING USE

■ RESIDENCE
■ PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
■ COMMERCE
■ INDUSTRY

HB HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
CIVIL PLANOING, CIVIL ENGINEERING, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
LAND SURVEYING APRIL 1987 6190W

10. *Chlorophytum comosum* (L.) Willd. subsp. *comosum* (L.) Willd. (syn. *Chlorophytum comosum* (L.) Willd. subsp. *virginicum* (L.) Willd.)
11. *Chlorophytum comosum* (L.) Willd. subsp. *virginicum* (L.) Willd. (syn. *Chlorophytum comosum* (L.) Willd. subsp. *comosum* (L.) Willd.)

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RECORDED 11845

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Number of Structures</u>
Excellent	21
Good	52
Fair	31
Poor	13

With 44 of the 117 structures identified as being in only fair or poor condition, nearly 40 percent of all structures in the central area may be classified in the problem category. Many of these buildings are old and do not provide the functional space needed for today's business activities. Most of the problem conditions are found on the east side of Austin Street, primarily in the southern portion of the business center. Nearly the entire block frontage from Main Street to Market Street on the east side of Austin Street is classified in poor condition. This concentration of deteriorated buildings creates an extremely poor visual impression of the business district for people entering from the south.

Existing deficiencies identified in the central area will make the central business district highly vulnerable to competing activities should a large shopping center be established in the trade area. Major improvements are needed to stabilize the commercial function in this part of the city. The objective of the plan is to establish a vital downtown area. To accomplish this, major investments in both public and private facilities will be required. Those buildings which are deteriorated should be removed to make way for adequate buildings which will provide the type of commercial space needed to serve today's customers. In addition to this, drainage facilities, off-street parking, and major improvements in the overall visual character of the area will be required.

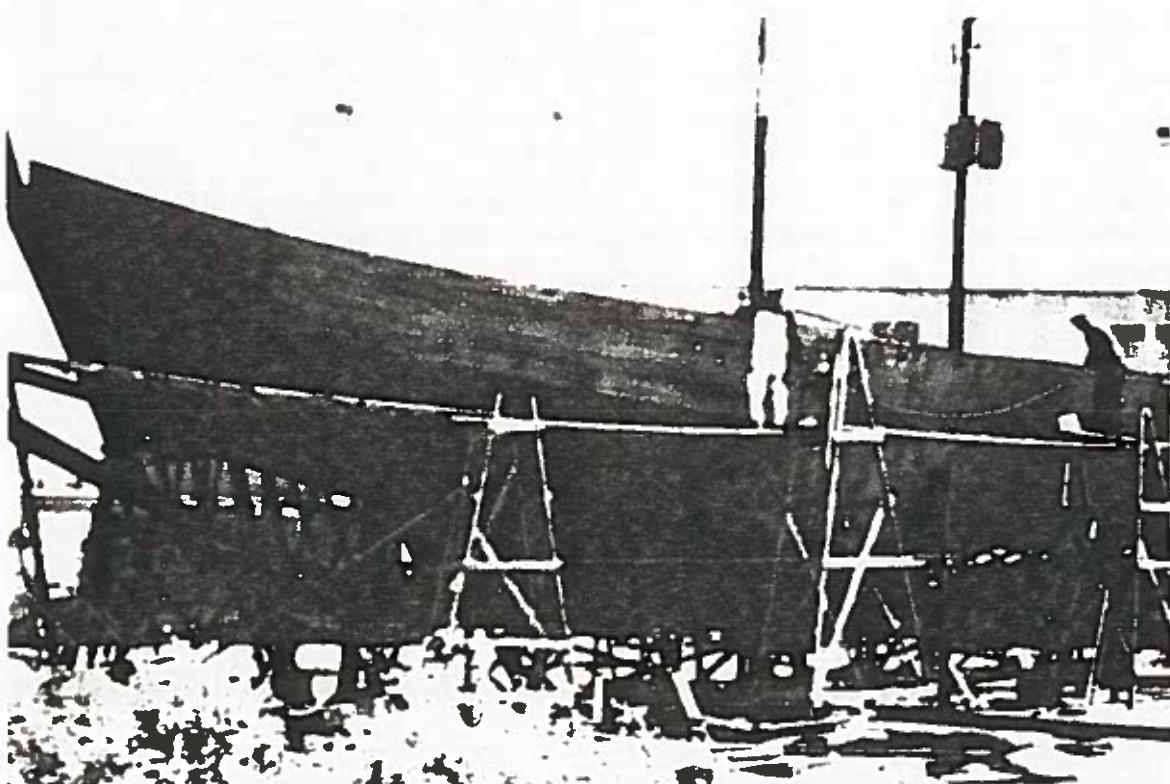
Objectives of the Plan

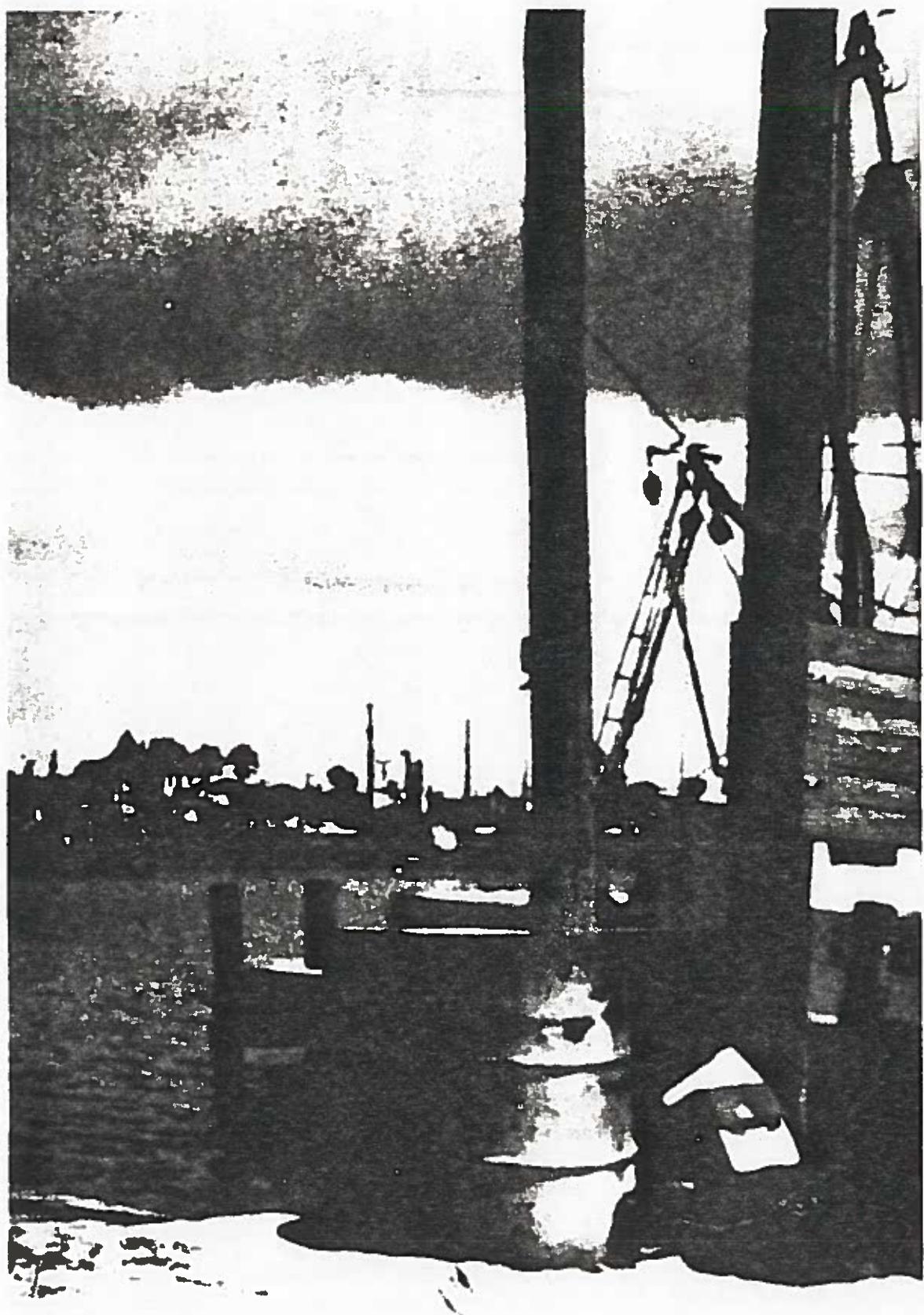
There are several important objectives which need to be accomplished by the plan for the revitalization of the central business district. First, the downtown area should provide retail services and facilities that are easily accessible and convenient to the shopping public and the tourists. The land use plan for Rockport focuses upon the central area of the city and the numerous recreational advantages which are found nearby. Second, these improvements should be compatible with the overall resort character of the city, capitalizing upon the waterfront location and the open space which have been preserved adjacent to Little Bay. Third, amenities which today's shopper has come to expect need to be provided, including convenient parking facilities, walkways for pedestrian movement, an attractive shopping environment, and a reasonable compact concentration of commercial facilities which will enable the shopper to move from one business to another without having to walk great distances or to move the car.

These objectives have been a primary consideration in the development of the central area plan. If these objectives are to be accomplished, it will require a coordinated effort of all interested merchants and property owners in the central



SHIP BUILDING AND RESORT FACILITIES PROVIDE INTEREST AND ATTRACT TOURISTS INTO THE CENTRAL CITY AREA. IMPROVED VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS, SIDEWALKS, TREES, AND CONVENIENT ACCESS AND PARKING ARE NEEDED ALONG WITH A GENERAL FACE-LIFTING OF STRUCTURES.





A NEW PROMENADE, ELEVATED COMMUNITY CENTER AND TOURIST COMMERCIAL FACILITIES ARE PROPOSED TO USE LITTLE BAY HARBOR AS A SCENIC ATTRACTION.

business district. Implementation of the plan should begin immediately with completion set for 1973. The central area of Rockport should become a major attraction complementing the tourist-resort character of the city and surrounding region.

Details of the Central Area Plan

Four basic functioning areas are proposed in the plan:

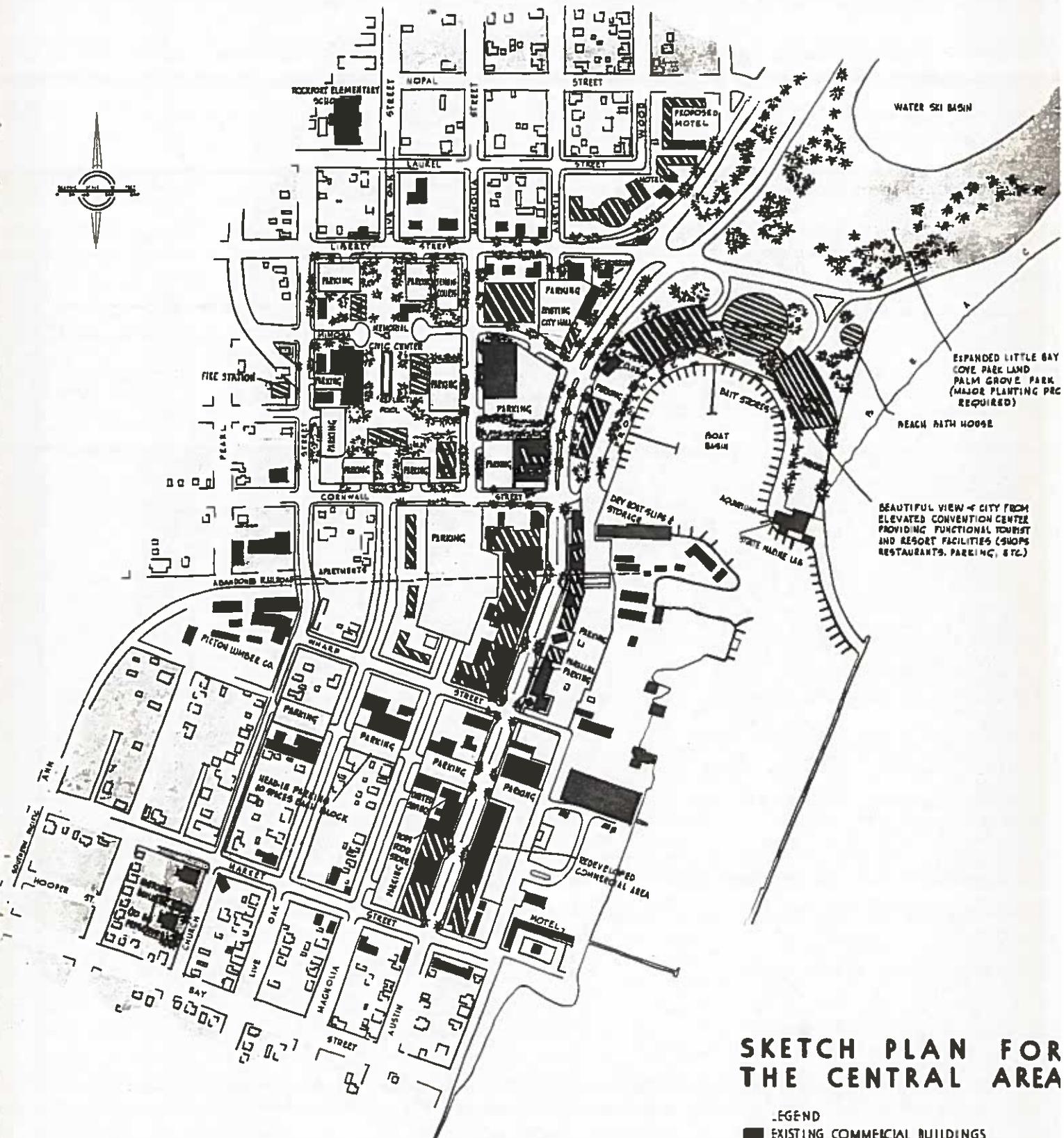
1. The resort and recreation complex from the Rockport Marina north into the park lands surrounding Little Bay;
2. The industrial area south of the marina which houses important industrial facilities, including fish companies, marine service operations, boat storage and the manufacturing activities at the Rockport Yacht and Supply Company, directly east of the main central business district;
3. The commercial core located on the existing business street with a concentration and redevelopment of much of the existing commercial areas;
4. The civic center to be developed in the blocks surrounding the Aransas County Courthouse.

Each of these functioning areas has its own distinct needs which must be met if it is to operate efficiently. Further, each should be arranged to complement and strengthen the others. Adequate access facilities, provisions for off-street parking and pedestrian circulation between parking areas, business, resort and industrial activities will be required to permit these areas to operate efficiently together. (See Plate 11.)

Commercial Facilities

Concentration of commercial buildings along Austin Street from Market to Cornwall is essential if the central area is to maintain its position as the major commercial center in the county. To accomplish this, the plan proposes several major modifications in the general arrangement of streets and parking areas in the central city. The Southern Pacific Railroad spur, from Church Street to the Bayfront, would be abandoned and the right-of-way utilized for more productive purposes. All east-west streets between Cornwall and Market, with the exception of Wharf and Main, would be abandoned with the right-of-way returned to abutting property owners. Wharf Street would remain open as a major connection between Water Street and Church Street. Main Street would actually become a series of large parking lots with internal circulation provided along the existing street pavements. Head-in parking provided on either side of Main Street would accommodate 40 cars in each block between Water and Church Streets. At all points where streets are abandoned, curb lines on Austin Street would be flared into the parking lane to allow street trees and plantings on the main business streets. At all intersections, the

CENTRAL AREA ROCKPORT, TEXAS



same flaring out of the pavement into the parking lane would occur, enabling palm trees and other indigenous plant material to be placed directly along the right-of-way of the street. Major improvements in the visual appearance of the central area would result.

Existing commercial activities which now account for approximately 220,000 square feet of floor space would be expanded to approximately 570,000 square feet with the addition of 350,000 square feet of new commercial floor space. These additions would occur in a series of redevelopment areas primarily located in the southern and central portions of the business area. Large new commercial facilities are indicated in the plan in the vicinity of the H.E. Butt Grocery Store between Mimosa and Concho Streets. The present city hall would be relocated into the civic center complex to the west and the nucleus of a small downtown shopping center would be established at the north end of the central area.

Resort Facilities

In the area surrounding the Rockport Marina, major new resort facilities are proposed. Three large structures are proposed at the north end of the marina with a community center as the central feature. Flanking the community center to the east and west, curving around the marina, would be elevated commercial buildings housing stores and restaurants above ground level parking areas. By establishing this center in a series of elevated structures, an extraordinary view of the bayfront could be obtained. The community center building would have a total floor space of approximately 25,000 square feet. The two elevated commercial buildings on either side of the community center would have 75,000 square feet, for a total complex of community and related retail areas amounting to approximately 100,000 square feet.

Parking areas surrounding this resort complex would accommodate 400 vehicles at ground level. Surrounding the marina would be a promenade featuring local plant materials: palm trees, oleander, hibiscus, and the like. These would be placed to create both a functional and visual attraction in the heart of the city.

Related recreation areas surrounding Little Bay would include expansion of picnicking facilities adjacent to the community center, near the water ski basin. On the beach side of the community center, a new beach bathhouse would be established to serve bathers. (See Plate 11.)

Industrial Area

Activities currently carried on in the industrial area adjacent to the business district would remain largely as they are today. These activities include dry boat slips and storage facilities for pleasure vessels, marine service activities, fishing companies and the very interesting fishing boat manufacturing operations at the Rockport Yacht and Supply Company. These industrial uses, activities and facilities could be made more attractive with a new coat of paint, well located trees and plants, located where they do not interfere with industrial activities.

Parking facilities proposed adjacent to the commercial buildings on Austin Street should also be utilized by the industrial areas. The character of these industrial areas is an asset which could be more effectively used as an attraction in the resort area.

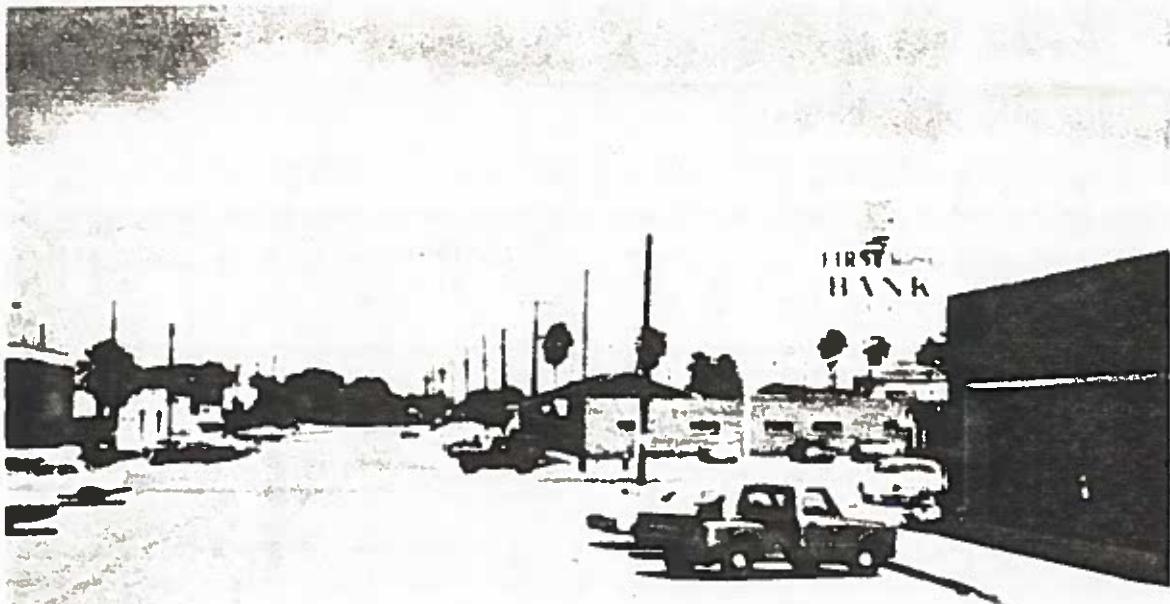
Civic Center

Existing public buildings in Rockport include the Aransas County Courthouse, the County Library, and jail located on a one-block site between Live Oak and Church Streets, from Mimosa to Concho Streets. The total complex of county buildings includes approximately 28,000 square feet of floor space: courthouse, 20,100 square feet; library, 2,100 square feet; and jail, 5,600 square feet. In addition to this, the City Hall, located on a triangular tract at the intersection of Broadway and Austin Streets, currently has a total floor space of approximately 3,500 square feet. Across from the City Hall, the Women's Club next to the Chamber of Commerce has a total area of about 3,500 square feet. In the southern and central portions of the business district, the U.S. Post Office and Rockport Fire Department are located on small sites. The post office has a total floor space of approximately 4,500 square feet and the fire station has 2,000 square feet.

In evaluating these existing buildings to determine their ability to meet long-range needs of the community, deficiencies were identified in all buildings except the Aransas County Courthouse. Long-range estimates of public building needs indicate that with the relocation of the public library, the courthouse would be able to expand to the west into the existing library building. The library, during the planning period, should be expanded to about four times its present size. The city hall is located on an extremely small site which could be better utilized for commercial purposes.

By 1990, with a population of about 18,000 persons, the city hall in Rockport should have a total floor space of approximately 10,000 square feet. In addition to this, the existing fire station would be better located on the major street system providing direct access to various portions of the community in times of need. The plan proposes to leave the post office in its present location on Market Street where the existing structure may be expanded as needed to serve the community.

The civic center complex is proposed to the west of the resort center in the six block area between Liberty and Cornwall Streets, from Church to Magnolia. This would be developed as an interior open space surrounded by the major public buildings. The open space includes the existing right-of-way of Live Oak Street which would be terminated from Cornwall to Liberty Streets. (See Plate 11.) In this open space, walkways, an open plaza and fountains or reflecting pools are proposed to create an attractive setting for the civic center complex. A new city hall is proposed immediately to the east of the Aransas County Courthouse. A new city-county library is proposed at the southern end of the plaza. The library would face Live Oak Street to the south and the open plaza to the north. A new fire station would be located on Church Street, west of the courthouse, with access directly onto the major street system.

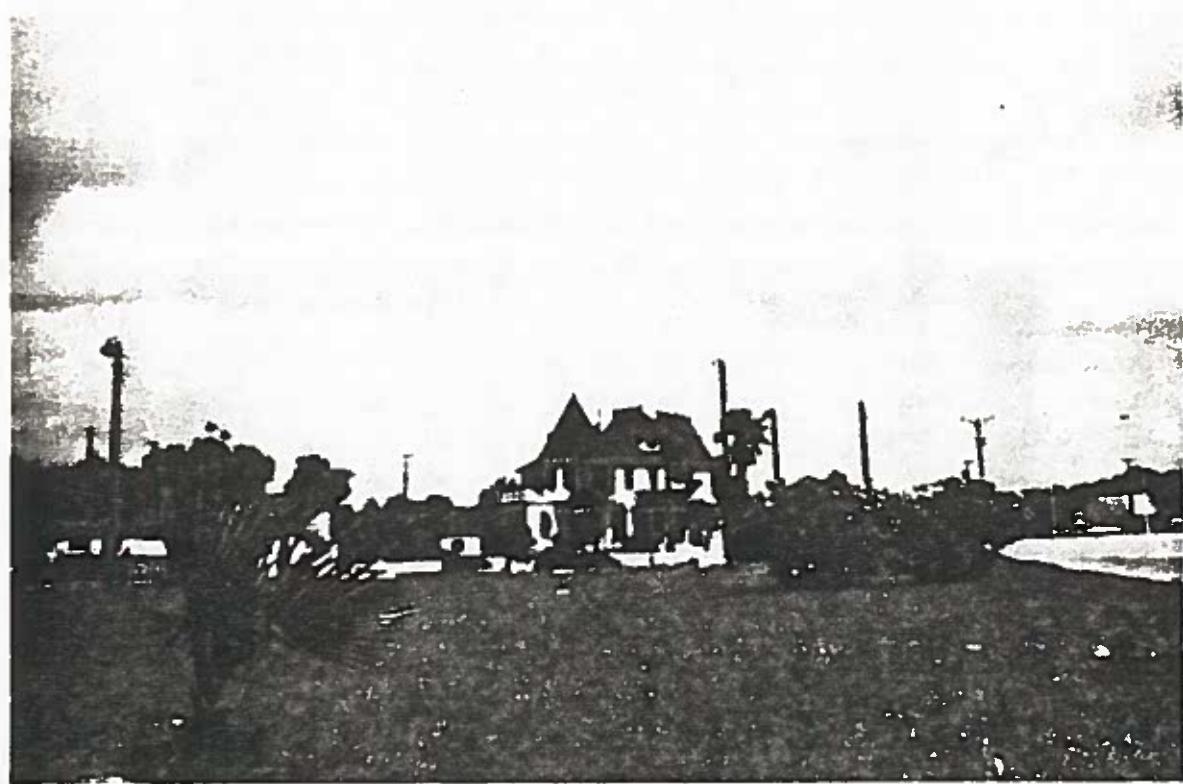


IN THE HEART OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA WIDE STREETS AND WIDELY SEPARATED COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES NOW DETRACT FROM THE AREA. THE PLAN PROPOSES TO INSTALL STREET TREES, NARROW WALKING DISTANCES AND CONSOLIDATE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES. NEW STREET LIGHTS HAVE ALREADY IMPROVED THE APPEARANCE OF DOWNTOWN.





THE ARANSAS COUNTY COURTHOUSE SHOULD SERVE AS THE HEART OF A NEW CIVIC CENTER NORTH OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA. ATTRACTIVE OPEN SPACES SUCH AS THIS AND THE PROPOSED SITE OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER BELOW ARE MAJOR PROPOSALS OF THE PLAN.



Flanking parking facilities would be located on the outer edges of the civic center site. A total of 250 parking spaces would be provided adjacent to the public buildings. This would include approximately 60 to 65 spaces adjacent to both the city hall and the courthouse, and about 50 spaces adjacent to the library. At the north end of the civic center site, two existing churches would remain as a part of the complex. A third church site is proposed within this area with flanking parking facilities located to the north. Live Oak Street from the north would terminate at Liberty Street with a pedestrian easement into the central plaza of the civic center. Mimosa Street would be vacated in the central portion of the plaza with streets ending in cul-de-sacs in front of the church sites. Existing tennis courts on Magnolia Street would be expanded to the north, affording recreational opportunities as a part of the civic center complex.

The objective of the civic center plan is to establish a compact arrangement of public buildings and facilities which would afford the public an opportunity to gain access to the services of government in a single location. Interrelationships between the courthouse, city hall and public library would provide additional functional advantages to the staff of the city and county. In addition to these functional and service advantages, an attractive grouping of public buildings would be established as a productive part of the central portion of the city. Growth anticipated in the county will necessitate that all public buildings be expanded during the planning period. Existing sites are too small and the concept of a civic center holds a significant number of advantages which would make such a complex a considerable asset to the community.

Parking Facilities

Major new parking improvements are proposed that will permit all of the various functioning areas to operate more efficiently. In the commercial center, approximately 800 parking spaces would be provided in on and off-street parking areas. Off-street parking areas are in flanking positions adjacent to all existing and proposed commercial structures. A total of 675 parking spaces in off-street lots are indicated on the plan. In addition to this, 130 on-street parking spaces would be provided. In the resort area surrounding the marina, there would be an additional 400 parking spaces. There would be an overall average of one parking space for approximately 300 square feet of retail floor space.

The central location of the business district in relationship to major street and highways will enable commercial activities in downtown Rockport to efficiently serve anticipated growth areas during the planning period. Urbanizing areas surrounding Rockport will also need to have neighborhood-type commercial centers. By establishing a concentrated center of retail activities in the heart of the community, residents of the city and its surrounding area will benefit from the convenience and selection of merchandise which would be available.

Appearance

Recent planting improvements on Austin Street, with the placement of palm trees in the street right-of-way, are a step in the right direction. This initial

improvement should be followed by other needed improvements, including: storm drainage, general repairs, removal of dilapidated structures, and additional parking. If Rockport is to remain competitive with neighboring cities remaining improvements are a necessity.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

The availability and distribution of potable water has been a critical element in the growth and development of cities. Recent technological advances have enabled cities to benefit from expanded knowledge of the role of air and water pollution in the spread of disease. This knowledge has accentuated the increasing importance of acquiring potable water and the sanitary disposal of wastes. Utilities and services of this nature are essential to the public health and welfare. They have long been accepted as a part of the day-to-day responsibilities of local government.

Policies of the community which control the distribution of water will have a significant effect on the growth pattern of the city. Inadequate planning and shortsighted policies may ultimately result in unnecessary expense and may encourage a disorderly growth pattern. The comprehensive plan seeks to avoid these problems.

Coordination of the city plan with county-wide projects for the transportation of good quality water from the Nueces River is also necessary. A well-regulated, carefully controlled water system is one of the most effective tools by which the city may influence future growth.

Existing Utilities System

Rockport secures its water supply from ground water sources at the present time. Waters from these wells are pumped into elevated storage facilities treated and distributed to areas largely within the present city limits. The sanitary sewer system covers a smaller area than the water supply system but serves the major built-up areas of the city. The sewage treatment plant is located on Copano Road just north of the present corporate limits. Outfall from the treatment plant is disposed of through a drainage ditch to the north emptying ultimately into the waters of Little Bay at Canoe Lake.

Major water transmission lines and the service area of the system are shown on Plate 12. Major lines in the system are from eight to ten inches in diameter. Water is currently supplied to all of the developed portions of the city and these lines have been extended to Key Allegro to provide water services in this new growth area. Local service from the water system is provided in a series of loops inside the city, primarily consisting of six-inch lines. Off of these lines the local distribution system includes smaller lines of three and four inches or less. Water is currently stored in two locations with elevated storage capacity of 550,000 gallons.

Major elements of the sanitary sewage system include lines of 10 to 12 inches. These sewer mains are generally located in the more intensively developed portions of the city and the larger lines are located to transport sewage directly into the treatment plant. New sewer mains have recently been established in the northeastern portion of the community in the Little Bay Shores Area. At the present time, new growth areas in and adjacent to the city have been developing to the northeast. Key Allegro has city water and needs sanitary sewer services. Expansion of the city

sanitary sewer system would eliminate growing health problems which may occur due to the concentration of septic tanks in the subdivision. Annexation of the area into the city should take place before the utility system is expanded to serve this area. The sewage treatment plant has recently been expanded to a capacity of 500,000 gallons per day. The capacity of this plant is rated as being able to serve 10,000 persons. The existing sewage treatment plant is well located in the northern portion of the city. However, as development occurs, the outfall from this plant will ultimately have to be piped some distance out into Aransas Bay.

Utility Plan

With a limited supply of ground water available to the county, the Aransas County Conservation and Reclamation District has sponsored a plan for transmitting waters from the Nueces River into the county to serve new growth areas. This water system will carry treated water from San Patricio County to the vicinity of Aransas Pass by way of a large transmission line from above Calallen in Nueces County. This water will be treated in the vicinity of Aransas Pass and at the Aransas County line will be sold to the City of Rockport which will be the primary contractor for the sale of water in the county.

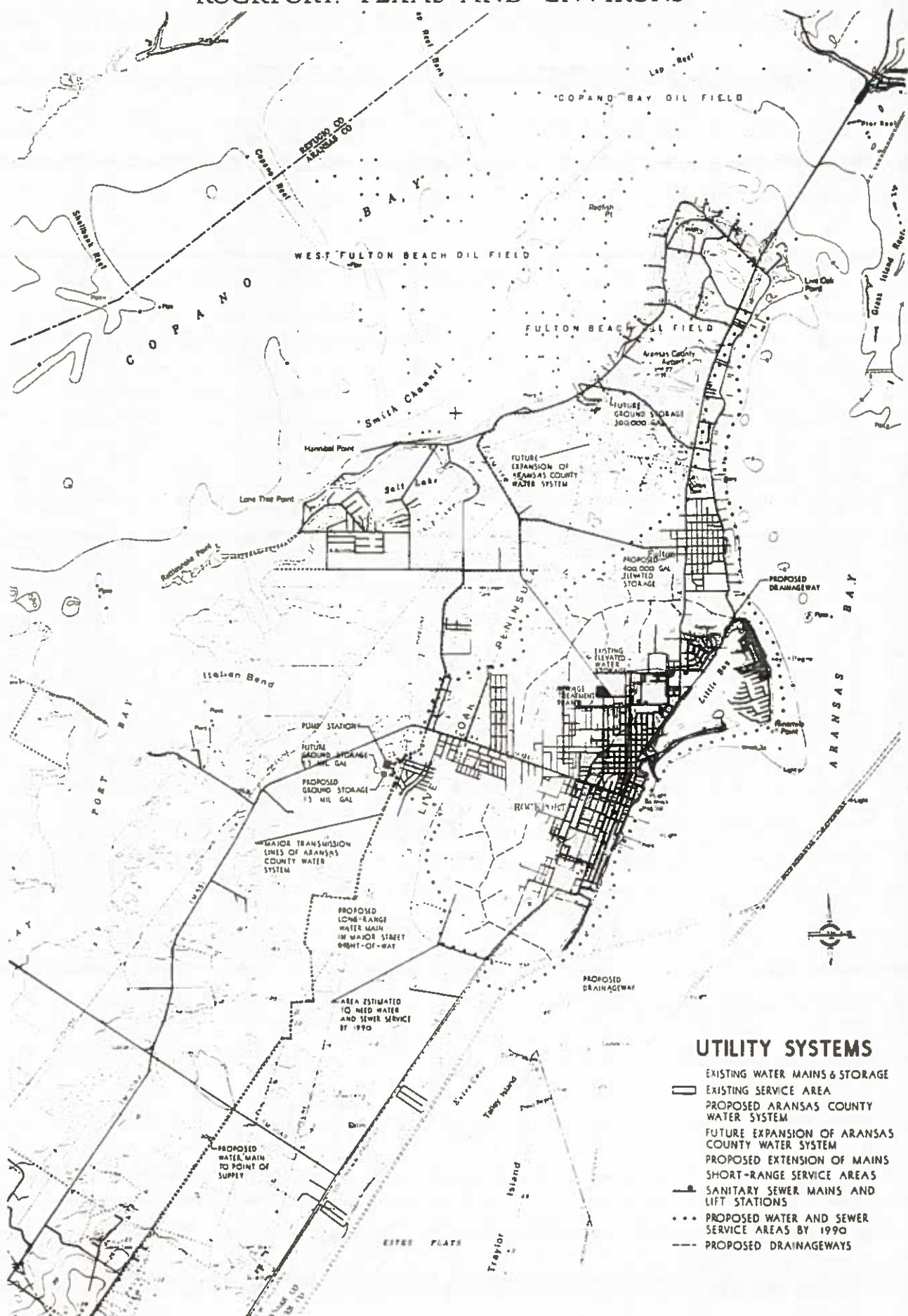
The water supply will be transported to storage facilities to be located immediately south of the Peninsula Oaks Subdivision. Initial storage in this system will consist of 1.5 million gallons of ground storage with a large pumping station located nearby. The initial distribution system will consist of a series of interconnected transmission lines providing direct access into Rockport north to Fulton and then to the Copano Bay area generally following existing farm-to-market road rights-of-way. A 400,000 gallon elevated storage tank would be constructed at Fulton to provide water distribution in that area. Larger subdivisions to the west of Rockport would be served directly from major transmission lines. (See Plate 12.)

Ultimately this system would be expanded with new lines extending north to serve the upper portions of Live Oak Peninsula. As demand increases in the Copano Bay subdivisions, facilities will be expanded to provide water to these residents.

Details of the Utilities Plan. Primary growth areas during the planning period are estimated to extend from Live Oak Point south including all of the area of Cove Harbor; to the west development should become concentrated two and one-half miles inland to the area surrounding the new subdivisions on West Market Street, including: Oak Terrace, West Terrace, and Peninsula Oaks Subdivisions. The north urban areas should become fairly intensively developed all the way to the proposed Route 35. Within this area, water and sewer services are estimated to be required during the planning period. The plan proposes to gradually expand the water system in accordance with the overall plan prepared for Aransas County.

To the northwest, urban development should become concentrated in the area between the coastline and the proposed realignment of State Route 35. Water and sewer facilities should be established in this area during the planning period. A series of loop mains generally following the location of proposed major streets is indicated on Plate 12. Toward the end of the planning period, after major drainage

ROCKPORT, TEXAS AND ENVIRONS



UTILITY SYSTEMS

- EXISTING WATER MAINS & STORAGE
- EXISTING SERVICE AREA
- PROPOSED ARANSAS COUNTY WATER SYSTEM
- FUTURE EXPANSION OF ARANSAS COUNTY WATER SYSTEM
- PROPOSED EXTENSION OF MAINS
- SHORT-RANGE SERVICE AREAS
- SANITARY SEWER MAINS AND LIFT STATIONS
- PROPOSED WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREAS BY 1990
- PROPOSED DRAINAGEWAYS

improvements are provided to the inland areas, urbanization would be able to extend far inland to the urban areas identified in the plan. Major water mains required as a part of the water system should generally follow the alignment of proposed major streets. Sanitary sewage facilities and the water system expansion into these areas will require detailed engineering study. Additional sewage treatment plants will likely be required, one possibly north of Fulton, and one to the south near Cove Harbor.

Major drainage facilities proposed in the plan would include the extension of large drainageways into the interior portion of the future urban areas. These drainageways would permit the construction of major waterfront development projects identified as part of the land use plan. The construction of these drainage facilities should be accomplished so that they would provide navigation for pleasure craft into the interior portions of the urban area. Since the navigation of these areas would be included as a part of the plan, the Aransas County Navigation District should play a major role in the planning and construction of these facilities.

This would require a coordinated planning and construction program involving the development of the drainageways and cooperative action with property owners insuring the best possible development of these inland areas. The extension of water lines and sewer lines would also have to be coordinated with these proposed drainage improvements. The end result would be an extraordinary complex of interior waterways, holding an enormous potential for water recreation in sheltered areas. These drainageways would nearly double the available water frontage in the planning area.

Since these improvements will require the expenditure of large sums of money, full advantage should be taken of the available assistance programs provided by the Federal Government. These programs provide funds for detailed planning and engineering and also provide for substantial grants which may be used to provide these facilities in advance of actual development. The scheduling of these projects and coordination of the various systems can play a major role in guiding the growth and development of the Rockport area.

PARKS AND RECREATION

In keeping with the overall objective of creating a tourist destination center in the Rockport area, the comprehensive plan proposes the establishment of major new parks and recreation facilities. These facilities would be coordinated with the overall development program of the community and the expansion of the proposed waterways and drainage areas would be a major source of new recreation opportunities for the community. Existing advantages of climate, location, and the extraordinary abundance of wildlife and fishing in the area provide the community with natural assets which should be maximized at every opportunity. In the past, the city and county have acted to establish major recreation features which have contributed measurably to the expansion of tourism and recreation in Aransas County. The development of Little Bay with its fine beach and the protected water sports areas is an excellent example of public action which has stimulated economic growth. Major proposals in the comprehensive plan are to coordinate the development of major streets and related community facilities which will complement existing assets.

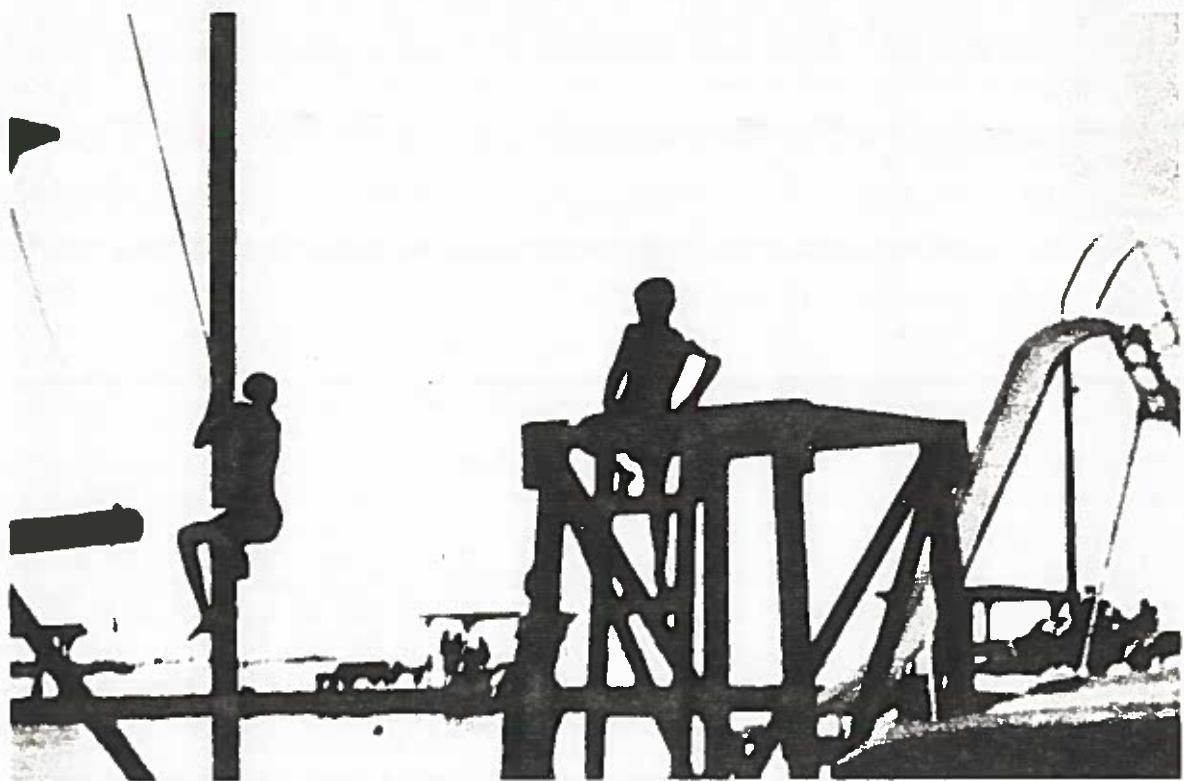
At the present time, there are several small parks in the city which provide open spaces and recreational facilities for the general public. These are located in the central developed area of the community. Playgrounds at the several school sites are also available primarily for the enjoyment of children in the community. These facilities, coupled with the recreation facilities at Little Bay, constitute the major portion of the present park system.

The State Highway Department has also provided roadside parks adjacent to Highway 35. These are well located and well maintained to serve travelers on the state highway system. At the north end of the peninsula, boat ramps and a fishing pier have been established for public use. North of Copano Bay Causeway, Goose Island State Park and the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge are also a part of available recreational facilities. The comprehensive plan proposes to establish major new recreational features as a part of this central urban area where urban development is anticipated. The plan also proposes the establishment of four large parks along the coastline.

The Need for Recreation

Tourists coming into the Rockport area are attracted by the assets which have been previously identified. Visitors coming into the area normally spend a week or more taking advantage of the various recreational opportunities. Swimming, fishing, birdwatching, and water sports are a few of the major facilities which are available. Additional facilities needed include campgrounds, trailer parks, marinas, boat ramps, fishing piers, preservation of wildlife areas, golf courses, and scenic attractions.

As a more complete range of recreational opportunities is available, and additional tourists are attracted into the area, new hotels and motels and related service facilities will be established. This will have a direct economic impact in the



PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES AT LITTLE BAY DELIGHT VISITORS AND ATTRACT TOURISTS. IMPROVED FACILITIES AND A MAJOR PLANTING PROGRAM WILL ENHANCE THIS MAJOR ATTRACTION AND STIMULATE EXISTING COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS SUCH AS EXCURSION VESSELS, TOURIST SHOPS, MOTELS, AND RESTAURANTS.



county, providing additional job opportunities. Economic advances would be directly related to the public investment expended in providing facilities of this nature.

Proposals of the Plan

Perhaps the single most important feature in the city park and recreation plan is the continued development of Little Bay Park. Additional dredging is proposed in the plan which would expand the park areas along Broadway and the peninsula extending behind the beach. Interior portions of this park along the waterfront should be bulkheaded to stabilize this development. South of Little Bay Shores, a peninsula is proposed to be extended into Little Bay which would provide a site for a small amphitheater and picnic facilities projecting out in the bay. Wildlife areas in the flats near Key Allegro should be protected as a part of the plan and every effort should be made not to disturb the existing ecology of this area. The Little Bay Park Development would also include the establishment of the community center which is identified in the central area plan.

In the major growth areas surrounding Rockport, as new elementary schools are established, neighborhood parks should be provided as a part of the overall development program. These neighborhood parks should follow the concept of the school-park neighborhood center. The development of these schools should follow an overall program for expanding educational facilities as required. This will necessitate continuing studies and evaluations of the relationships between permanent and seasonal residents in the school district.

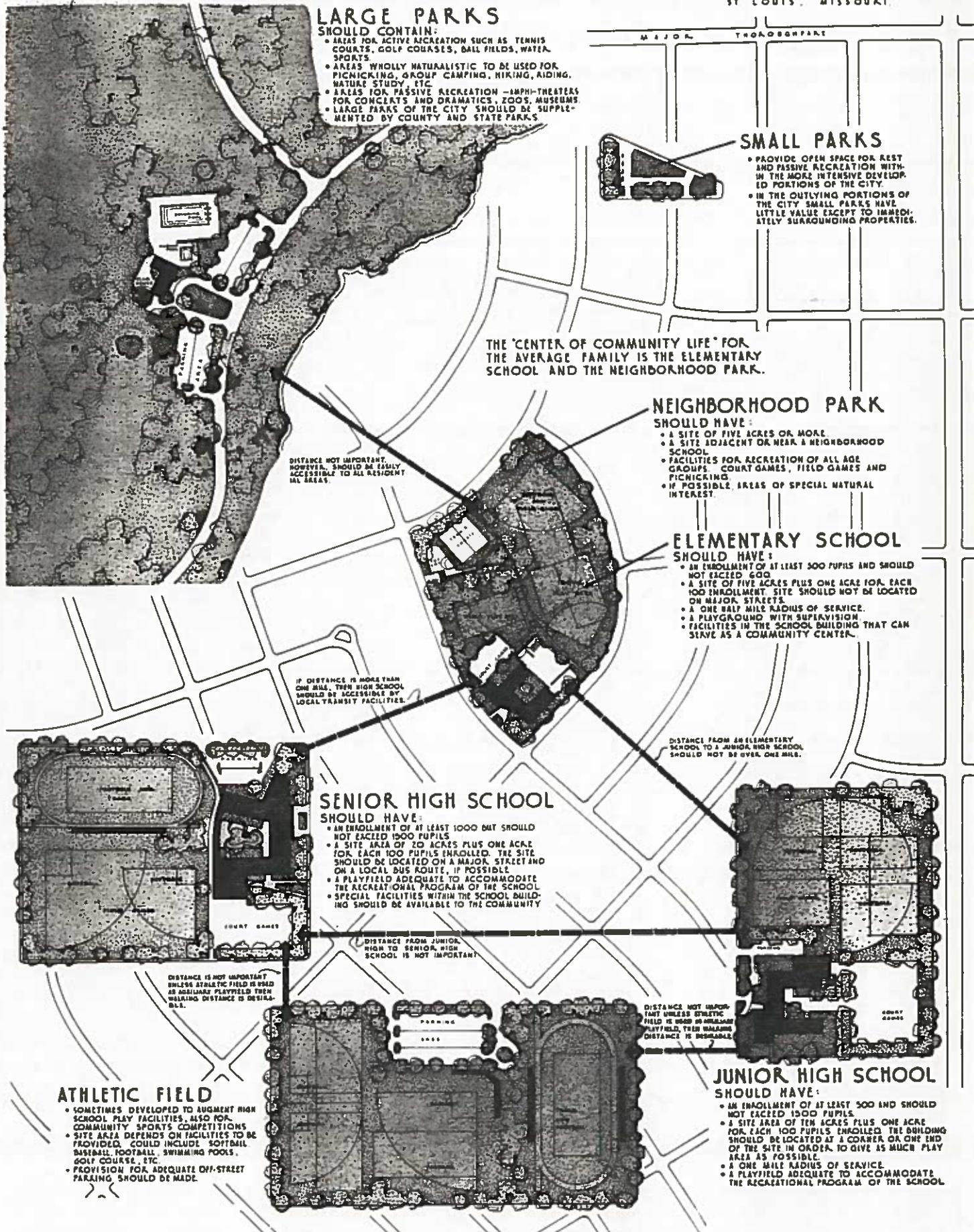
Standards for the development of schools and parks are shown on Plate 13. An example of this type of combined facility is also indicated on the sketch detail for the south neighborhood shown on Plate 6. A generalized indication of future school sites and neighborhood parks is shown on the Park and Recreation Plan, Plate 14. The exact number of schools required and their location would necessitate continuing study and evaluation. In addition to these facilities and the improvements at Little Bay, the plan proposes the establishment of a large new park along the waterfront north of Cove Harbor. This park would establish a buffer between proposed resort facilities on the Cove Peninsula and adjacent industrial areas. This park should be a regional-type park providing large open spaces and functional activity areas. With the development of a dredged marina in this area, the park would also serve as a major recreation center in the southern portion of the city.

At the northern end of the peninsula, a large park is also proposed on Live Oak Point. This park would provide a full range of major tourist facilities, including a large campground, trailer park, a marina, boat ramps, fishing piers, and related facilities. This extraordinary location at the north end of the peninsula contains a large grove of wind-sculptured live oak trees. These should, of course, be preserved and facilities developed among the trees to maximize site advantages.

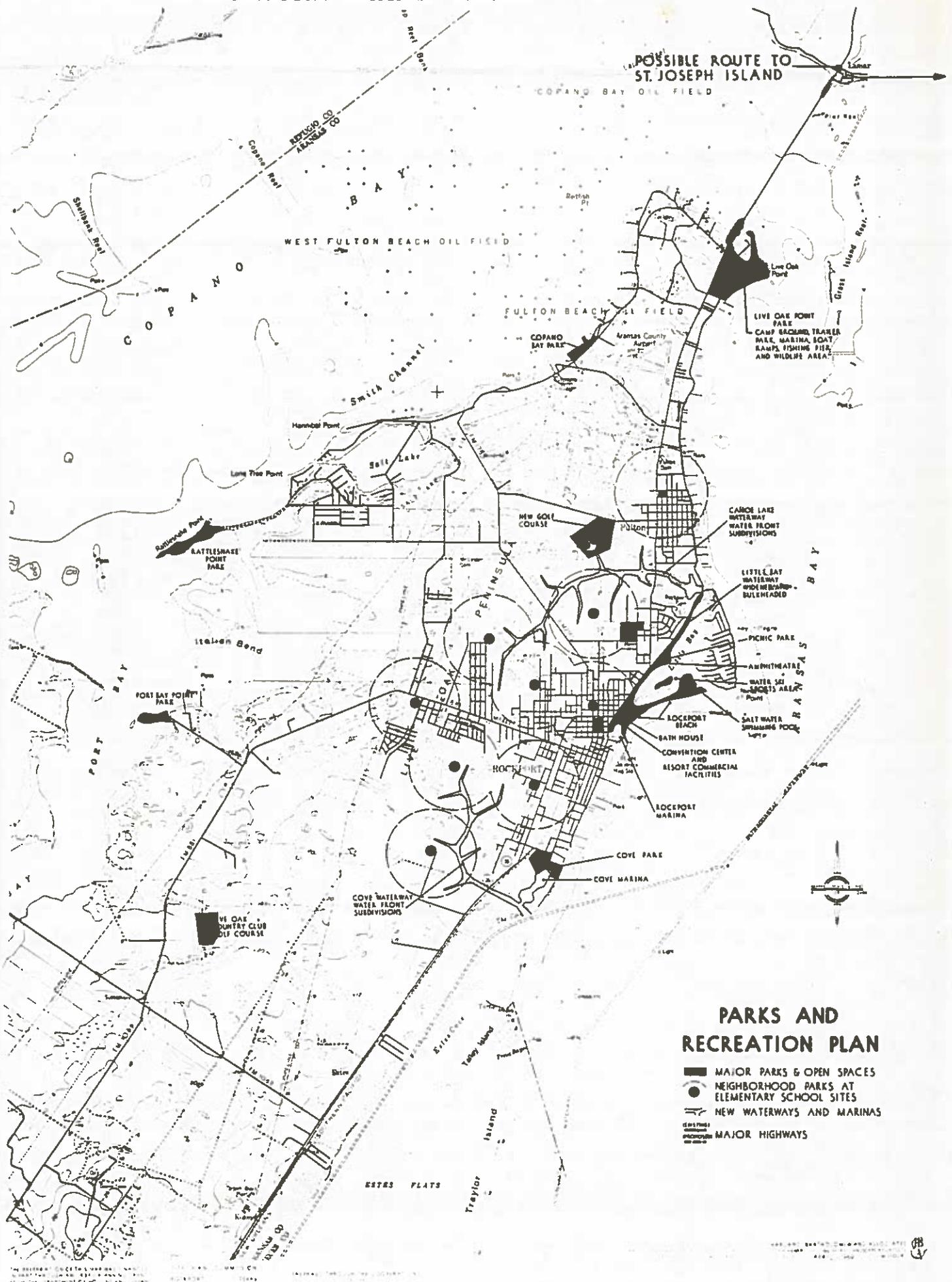
A third large park is proposed on Copano Bay. This park would provide recreational opportunities on this side of the peninsula and would also serve to

GENERAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOLS & PARKS

HAROLD BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
CITY PLANNERS
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI



ROCKPORT, TEXAS AND ENVIRONS



PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

MAJOR PARKS & OPEN SPACES
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AT
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITES
NEW WATERWAYS AND MARINAS
MAJOR HIGHWAYS

MAJOR HIGHWAYS

protect the clear zone at the western end of the Aransas County Airport. Two new parks are proposed on the Port Bay side of the peninsula at Rattlesnake Point and at Port Bay Point. Major street connections would be extended into these areas where a variety of facilities might be established. Wildlife in this part of the county is abundant during much of the year, and fishing opportunities would be a major attraction. The area might also be developed as a campground. A large new golf course is proposed just west of Fulton in the vicinity of the new alignment of State Route 35.

In addition to the park and recreation areas identified in the plan, the present alignment of State Route 35 should be maintained as a scenic highway as a part of the Texas Tropical Trail. Once the Hug-the-Coast Highway is established, the new alignment of State Route 35 could carry that designation.

A new access road to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Aransas County should also be considered. While this wildlife area is north of the planning area, it is in the county and constitutes an important tourist attraction. Since these lands were removed from the county tax base, it would seem fitting to provide direct access to Route 35, convenient to Rockport and commercial areas in the county.

Major assistance programs are available for the establishment of parks and open spaces in the community. These assistance programs, including open space grants and community facility development programs, should be fully utilized so that local financial resources will not be overtaxed in expanding and developing parks and recreation areas and community facilities. The economic advantages of such a park and recreation system should be stressed so that residents of the community fully understand the major impact that facilities of this nature will have on the future growth potential of the city and its surrounding area. While all community facilities act to serve the needs of local residents, the availability of these services and facilities also can act as a major economic stimulant, attracting people into the community, both as short-term visitors and as permanent residents.

As an overall recommendation, the establishment of attractively planted park and recreation facilities is absolutely essential. In the Little Bay area and in existing parks in the community, the amount of plant materials which have been provided is limited. Major planting programs should be undertaken in the community. These would include the establishment of the widest possible variety of native plants, including palm, live oaks, retama and mesquite trees, and other indigenous forms of vegetation. The objective in the Little Bay area should be to create the most attractive possible park area as a central feature in the community. Smaller flowering plant materials, such as oleander, hibiscus, and a wide variety of native cactus plant materials should also be a part of such a development program. Wherever possible, low maintenance plant materials should be utilized so that costs do not become excessive.

REGULATORY MEASURES AND ADMINISTRATION

Zoning and subdivision regulations offer the most effective means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Rockport now has regulatory measures of this type in force. The zoning ordinance was adopted in 1965 and the subdivision regulations, updated as a part of this planning program, were adopted in 1968. The community has been able to judge the effectiveness of these measures and in numerous instances, the benefits of well-conceived and uniformly enforced regulations are apparent.

Zoning Regulations

Objectives of zoning are to regulate the use of lands and buildings for commercial, industrial and residential purposes. Open spaces around buildings are established to provide for the health and welfare of residents. The size of lots and height of buildings are regulated and off-street parking areas are required. This is done by dividing the city into various districts where different uses are permitted and the amount of concentration is controlled. Material benefits for homeowners, businessmen, industries and the general public result from adequate controls and proper administration of these measures. As a result, conflicting uses will gradually disappear, well-defined neighborhoods, business and industrial areas will be established. The city will be able to implement the Land Use Plan through zoning and major economies in providing public facilities, streets, utilities, parks, schools, fire stations and similar public improvements will result.

The present zoning ordinance provides six districts: two single-family residence districts, one duplex and one apartment district, two business districts, and one industrial district. Review of the zoning ordinance and district map showed that to a large extent this ordinance was established to reflect existing conditions. There are too many commercial areas, too widely spread out (about seven miles of commercial frontage in the city) and most of them too small to be effectively used. The city is a tourist center and needs to project this image to outside investors. A tourist zone allowing considerable latitude for hotels, motels, restaurants, and related recreational features is needed. Industrial areas are small and fairly compact near the railroad and along the shoreline. Residential areas are generally well-defined and well-regulated.

Four specific problems exist which need to be corrected. Two of these are found inside the city and the other is found in the surrounding urbanizing areas.

1. The commercial areas need to be reduced in size to a series of well-defined commercial centers. This will serve to strengthen the business function in the city, to eliminate conflicting uses, and improve the functional and visual characteristics of the city. These areas should be established in accordance with the adopted land use plan.
2. A tourist resort district should be established along the waterfront of the city. This would also be established to

conform to the Land Use Plan. Provisions found in the recommended Model Zoning Ordinance for the Coastal Bend Region, detailing requirements for the R-4 Semi-Residential District, could be modified to serve as a new tourist resort district. The following uses would be added:

- a. Motels and hotels.
- b. Restaurants (permitted as a part of a motel or hotel operation or by special permit).

All uses allowed in the R-1, R-2 and R-3 Districts would be permitted in addition to those uses specified for the new district. Detailed provisions identifying lot areas, widths, setbacks, and parking requirements are found in sections three through seven of the Model Zoning Ordinance.

3. Problems related to the use and occupancy of mobile homes as permanent residences need to be solved. A suggested text allowing mobile home subdivisions and trailer camps is now being considered by the city. These new provisions need to be carefully evaluated prior to adoption as a part of the zoning ordinance.
4. Zoning provisions need to be extended into the rapidly urbanizing areas of the county. This is needed to insure proper measures designed to protect new growth areas from conflicting uses. Aransas County does not have power to enact zoning regulations at this time since Texas has no county zoning enabling legislation. However, recommendations of the Texas Research League which would permit counties to undertake planning and zoning are needed and should be adopted. Officials and residents of Aransas County should support this legislation. Regulations contained in the Coastal Bend Model Zoning Ordinance would be adequate to serve zoning needs in the county as well as the city. If county zoning enabling legislation is not passed, the cities should be given the power to enact and enforce zoning regulations in their area of subdivision jurisdiction, i.e., five miles from their city limits.

Subdivision Ordinance

Objectives of the subdivision regulations are to insure proper standards for the development of new growth areas. Provisions in the ordinance specify design standards, stipulate the minimum level of improvements such as streets, water and sewer lines and drainage facilities, require procedures for filing plats, and serve as a means for coordinating public improvements identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance work together to bring about the Land Use and Community Facilities Plans. They are administered by the City Planning