

GENERAL PLAN REPORT  
HUMBOLDT COUNTY - FERNDALE PLANNING AREA  
FERNDALE PLANNING AREA  
CITY OF FERNDALE

1967  
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GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS:

~~LAND USE~~ Replaced by 1986 dec.  
TRANSPORTATION  
PUBLIC FACILITIES

The preparation of this General Plan study was financed in part through an Urban Planning grant from the Housing and Home Finance Agency under the provisions of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

Humboldt County - Ferndale General Plan Project

*date*

*Page*

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY - FERNDALE PLANNING AREA

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RECORD OF APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Land Use  
Transportation  
Public Buildings, Facilities

Approved by:

City Planning Commission (Council) ..Dec. 7, 1966  
County Planning Commission .....Dec. 7, 1966

Adopted by:

City Council .....Jan. 24, 1967  
Board of Supervisors.....March 28, 1967

SPECIFIC PLAN ELEMENTS

Zoning Ordinance

Approved by Planning Commission,  
Adopted by City Council .....July 5, 1966

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TRANSMITTAL

March 30, 1967

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Humboldt

The Honorable City Council  
City of Ferndale

Gentlemen:

We are pleased to submit herewith the  
General Plan report for the Humboldt County-Ferndale  
Planning Area and the planning area of the City of  
Ferndale.

This project, completed as another in the  
series of County-City cooperative planning programs,  
confirms the value of the partnership approach to  
area planning in Humboldt County.

It has been a real pleasure to work with the  
many officials and agencies involved in the project,  
and we are convinced that the results of the team  
efforts will prove their value in guiding in an  
orderly manner the future growth and development of  
the project area.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Campbell

## INTRODUCTION

Humboldt County has established a pattern of planning areas which divide the County into logical geographical areas for planning purposes. Each of the planning areas contains one or more incorporated Cities which participate with the County in the planning process.

This General Plan Report describes the project completed for the Humboldt County-Ferndale Planning Area which was undertaken as a cooperative project under a joint exercise of powers agreement between the County and the City of Ferndale.

This approach to area planning ensures that a common language, uniform standards and complete coordination of plans of the two jurisdictions will result.

In addition to the coordination of General Plans, the precise plan items developed for the City, such as its new Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Plan are based upon and are adaptations of comparable County ordinances.

Relationships established in the planning process, discussions during joint City-County public hearings on the proposed Plan and offers of continuing assistance by County Planning staff to the City are proof of the effectiveness of the process and promise of beneficial results.

OBJECTIVES and STANDARDS.

1. Objectives of the Plan

*Replanned*

The City of Ferndale is located on the southern edge of the fertile Eel River valley about four miles from the Redwood Highway and railroad to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The City extends up the timbered mountainside to the south, and spreads onto the flat valley floor to the north.

Population has increased at a slow and steady rate, from 901 persons in 1940; 1,032 in 1950; 1,116 in 1960 to an estimated 1,371 in 1965. The somewhat isolated location of the City and the agricultural use of surrounding lands have contributed to the slow growth which has protected the City from the detrimental effects of rapid expansion and has also preserved its peaceful character and architectural charm.

Objectives of the plan are to provide growing room for expanded commercial and tourist services, light industrial operations related to local resources and additional residential development areas, all keyed to a sound balance of such uses to promote economic stability and to retain the basic character of the community and the high standard of public facilities and services. A primary objective is to preserve, and promote in the future, the charm and strong appeal of the victorian and similar early California architecture existing in and near the City.

The total planning area is almost entirely either fertile agricultural valley land or mountain grazing and timber lands, and must be preserved for continuing agricultural use. Recreation will become an important secondary use.

2. Standards for the Plan

A General Plan is designed to constitute a long-term general guide for physical growth and development of a particular land area. It is developed from studies of physical features, existing developments upon the land, and other such information as will provide a basis for projecting future uses of land and facilities which will be necessary to accommodate and properly serve such uses.

a. LAND USE ELEMENT.

This element of the General Plan assigns a primary use classification, in general terms, to all parts of the Planning Area. It is, therefore, the key element of the plan, and sets the pattern for other elements of the plan.

Wherever possible, the residential land use areas are divided into neighborhood units, each ideally being an area which will contain about five hundred families, which will contain a school and park or playground, which is adjacent to (but not divided by) one or more main traffic ways, and which contains or is conveniently close to local shopping facilities and other services.

(1) Classifications, Population Standards.

R-H, Residential, High Density Areas, 16 plus families per acre. In urban areas with domestic water, sewer systems, etc.

R-M, Residential, Medium Density Areas, 5-15 families per acre. In urban areas with domestic water, sewer systems, etc.

R-L, Residential, Low-Density Areas, 3-5 families per acre.

R-S, Suburban Residential Areas, 0-3 families per acre. In suburban areas where larger sites are desirable, and where either domestic water or sewer may not be available.

R-R, Rural Residential Areas, minimum site 1 acre. In rural areas where large sites are desirable, or necessary due to topography, and where livestock may reasonably be permitted.

A, General Agricultural Areas, minimum site 2½ acres. In rural areas which are suitable for light agriculture or grazing, where topography may make large sites necessary, and where small parcel divisions would not be compatible with the primary agricultural uses.

It is intended that agricultural preserves may be designated and established within portions of "A" classification areas.

E-A, Exclusive Agricultural Areas, minimum parcel 20 acres. In areas where soils are of good quality for agricultural production purposes, where agriculture is the logical and desirable primary use, and where the protection and preservation of such use is desirable and in the public interest.

It is intended that agricultural preserves may be designated and established within portions of "E-A" classification areas.

CON-T, Conservation-Timber Areas, minimum parcel 2½ acres. In forested foothill and mountain areas where conservation of the watershed and measures to control damage from erosion, wildlife and scarring by excessive grading are in the public interest, and where limited forestry, grazing and recreational uses are permissible.

It is intended that agricultural preserves may be designated and established within portions of "E-A" classification areas.

- CON-F, Conservation-Floodway Areas, minimum parcel variable. In the channels of rivers and streams, including the areas which carry normal flood waters or the areas between existing or planned levees, dykes or other such flood control features, and in which agricultural and recreational uses may be permissible.
- CON-Rec., Conservation-Recreation Areas, minimum parcel variable. In areas of substantial acreage where natural scenic, historical, geological, vegetation or other such features of a recreational nature occur and where the public interest requires their preservation for recreational purposes or for passive private use.
- P-F, Public Facility Areas, minimum parcel variable. In areas where major public or quasi-public sites and/or improvements are located.
- IND, Industrial Areas, minimum parcel variable. In areas where the land is served by necessary transportation and utility facilities, where industrial operations may reasonably be located, and where such uses will be compatible with adjacent uses.
- G-C, General Commercial Areas, minimum parcel variable. In areas suitable for varied commercial uses, including retail and wholesale operations, warehousing and distribution, maintenance, repair and servicing activities.
- C-C, Central Commercial Areas, minimum parcel variable. In central business district locations which are the primary retail trade, service, financial and professional centers for the planning area.
- L-S-C, Local Service Commercial Areas, minimum parcel variable. In satellite commercial center locations where convenience type shopping facilities are necessary to serve surrounding residential neighborhoods. One acre of building coverage plus three acres of parking per 1,000 families in the service area is a general recommended standard.

b. STREETS and HIGHWAYS.

Ferndale and a large part of the planning area are somewhat isolated from primary traffic routes, and the area Land Use Plan proposes low density land uses which will not generate large traffic volumes. For these reasons no four-lane highways are anticipated in the project plan period.

(1) Major Local Streets.

Right-of-way: 64 to 84 feet.

Improvements: two 12 foot moving lanes,  
two 8 foot parking lanes,  
sidewalk-utility strips.

(2) Standard Local Streets.

Right-of-way: 60 to 64 feet.

Improvements: two 12 foot moving lanes,  
two 6-8 foot parking  
lanes,  
sidewalk-utility strips.

(3) Minor Local Streets.

Right-of-Way: 56 to 60 feet.

Improvements: two 10 foot moving lanes,  
two 6-8 foot parking  
lanes,  
sidewalk-utility strips.

c. PARK and RECREATION AREAS.

Three types of park and recreation facilities are proposed in the plan to serve the planning area:

(1) Regional Parks:

These are proposed to be State or County sites on ocean beaches, along the Eel River and in timbered mountain locations, developed for regional use for boating, fishing, picnicking, swimming and hiking.

(2) Area Parks:

These are proposed to be large local parks in or near the center of population, developed for area use with facilities such as a softball diamond, swimming pool, playground equipment, picnicking, etc. on sites of 5 acres or more.

(3) Neighborhood Parks:

These are proposed to be small park or playground areas in residential neighborhoods and designed primarily for children, on sites of from 2 to 4 acres.

d. SCHOOLS and PUBLIC BUILDINGS

(1) Schools.

Standards proposed for elementary schools are those recommended by the State Division of Architecture and subject to local School Board variations.

Elementary Schools = site, 5 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students; capacity, 500 students maximum.

High School = site 30 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students; capacity, 1,000 students maximum.

(2) Other public buildings.

A civic center site for a new City Hall and related uses is proposed in Ferndale.

Fire stations in the planning area are proposed as the need develops in accordance with Pacific Fire Rating Bureau standards, and libraries, etc. per County standards.

# JUMBLIDT COUNTY-FERNDALE AREA GENERAL PLAN

## GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

### LAND USE

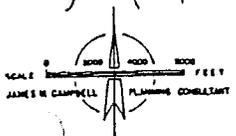
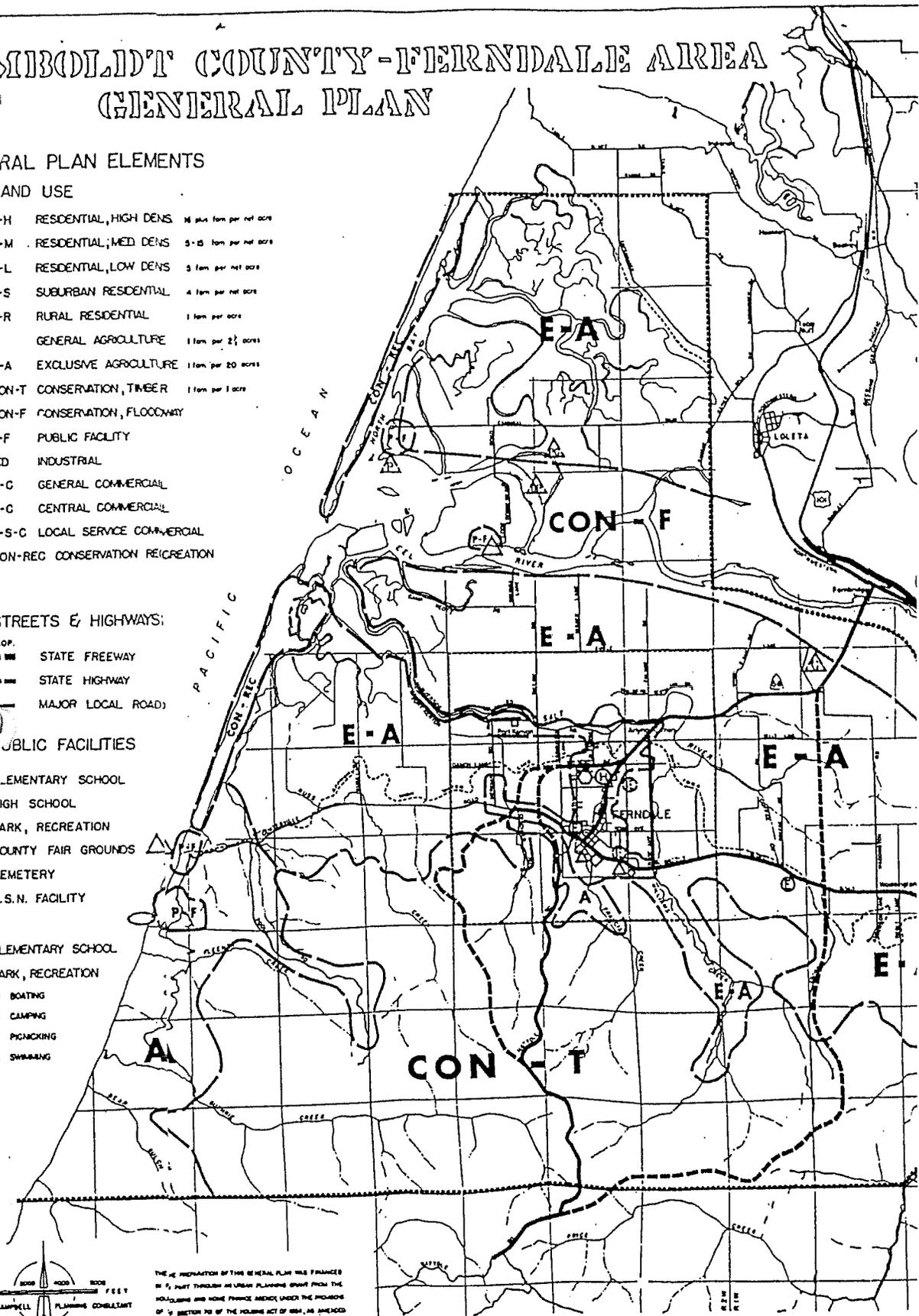
	R-H RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENS	16 plus fam per net acre
	R-M RESIDENTIAL, MED DENS	5-15 fam per net acre
	R-L RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENS	5 fam per net acre
	R-S SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL	4 fam per net acre
	R-R RURAL RESIDENTIAL	1 fam per acre
	A GENERAL AGRICULTURE	1 fam per 2 1/2 acres
	E-A EXCLUSIVE AGRICULTURE	1 fam per 20 acres
	CON-T CONSERVATION, TIMBER	1 fam per 1 acre
	CON-F CONSERVATION, FLOODWAY	
	P-F PUBLIC FACILITY	
	IND INDUSTRIAL	
	G-C GENERAL COMMERCIAL	
	C-C CENTRAL COMMERCIAL	
	L-S-C LOCAL SERVICE COMMERCIAL	
	CON-REC CONSERVATION RECREATION	

### STREETS & HIGHWAYS:

	EXIST. PROP.
	STATE FREEWAY
	STATE HIGHWAY
	MAJOR LOCAL ROAD

### PUBLIC FACILITIES

	E ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
	H HIGH SCHOOL
	PARK, RECREATION
	COUNTY FAIR GROUNDS
	CEMETERY
	U.S.N. FACILITY
	PROG.
	ELEM. SCHOOL
	PARK, RECREATION
	B BOATING
	C CAMPING
	P PICNICKING
	S SWIMMING



THE PREPARATION OF THIS GENERAL PLAN WAS FINANCED IN PART THROUGH AN URBAN PLANNING GRANT FROM THE HOUSING AND HOME FINANCE AGENCY UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 701 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954, AS AMENDED.

## THE GENERAL PLAN

### 1. The Planning Area.

About one half of the Humboldt County-Ferndale Planning Area, which contains a total area of 77 square miles, is in the flat, low-lying Eel River delta which was inundated during the December, 1964 flood, and which has historically flooded in lesser degree with a minimum of damage and with agricultural benefits from periodic deposits of fertile river silt.

The southerly portion of the planning area consists of higher river valley lands rising into steep forested mountains.

The City of Ferndale and its planning area lie in the center of the total area, and include both flood plain and mountain lands.

Population density in the total area is about 20 persons per square mile. However, the greater part of this population is in the 9 square mile Ferndale Planning Area.

### 2. Land Use Element.

Agriculture is the primary land use in the total planning area, with dairy and pasture lands spread across the delta, and light grazing in the hill and mountain lands. The General Plan classifies about one half of the total planning area as E-A Exclusive Agricultural, anticipating early zoning to effectuate the plan and to preserve such areas for agricultural production purposes.

The Bel River floodway is classified as a CON-F Conservation-Floodway area within the proposed levees as designated by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is proposed that this area be zoned to ensure State and Federal assistance in necessary levee construction.

Higher valley and coastal lands are classified A General Agricultural, indicating light agricultural primary use and rural residential and recreational as secondary uses, and the higher mountain areas are classified CON-T Conservation-Timber to indicate the need to conserve such areas for timber production, grazing and limited residential and recreational uses.

Sand spit and ocean beaches are designated CON-REC Conservation-Recreation areas to indicate the importance of protecting them for acquisition for public recreation purposes.

Within the Ferndale Planning Area land use classifications reflect the existing pattern of development of a small urban community and its area of planned future expansion.

A zoning ordinance and zoning plan for the Ferndale City area, based on the General Plan, have been adopted and have made effective that portion of the plan.

It is anticipated that the proposed zoning plan for the Ferndale Planning Area will provide the guide for like zoning of the unincorporated portion of the planning area.

3. Streets and Highways (Transportation) Element.

Because of its isolation, low population density and limited physical development pattern, the Humboldt County-Ferndale Planning Area is now, and will in the future be adequately served by a system of two-land highways if the Land Use Plan is valid and effective.

Improvements of present routes, and future construction, as required, of future Plan routes will provide safe and adequate transportation facilities.

In the Ferndale Planning Area future routes are planned to the east and west of the City to provide for relieving congestion and removing heavy trucking on Main Street, and to provide access to future urban development and to the mountain areas to the south.

4. Public Facilities Element.

The Land Use Element indicates a light need for public facilities for local public service because of low population density. Future needs and general site locations are shown on the Plan map for schools, local parks, etc.

Recreation in the planning area is of primary importance and the plan proposes, in addition to ocean beaches, several sites along the Eel River to supplement existing small County park sites, and to be developed for fishing, swimming, camping and picnic use in conjunction with levee projects.

PRECISE PLAN ELEMENTS

1. Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Plan.

Ferndale has grown and developed in the past without the guidance and regulation of zoning. The slow rate of growth and the absence of land speculation and extensive subdividing have permitted an orderly development in the past in which different land uses were located in a surprisingly orderly pattern.

This permitted the preparation of a sound zoning plan in which very few non-conforming uses were created and in which expansion of all uses is possible without use conflicts.

The new Zoning Ordinance is based upon the County ordinance, using common terminology and matching types of zones.

Under the "D" design review combining zone feature many of the old victorian and similar design structures may be preserved for both esthetic and economic purposes.

The ordinance and zoning map have been adopted and are in effect.

2. Proposed Planning Area Zoning.

A proposed zoning plan for the Ferndale Planning Area has been prepared and submitted to the County Planning Department, to be used as a general zoning guide in the area. The plan includes proposed exclusive agricultural zoning for extensive areas which were inundated in the 1964 flood, which zoning

should be recognized as an acceptable substitute for flood plain zoning until such time as a levee system along the Eel River is constructed. Such zoning is desirable to preserve the rich agricultural lands, now and after levee construction. Transition zoning is shown on the zoning plan, based on the General Plan, to permit residential development in inundation areas after levee construction and in hill lands to the south as future demands develop.

3. Central Business District, Parking.

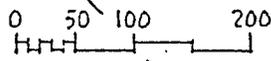
Ferndale is an old city in which many of the old commercial and residential buildings have been preserved because expensive new construction has not been economically feasible and because of a recent strong desire to preserve the attractive older structures and the charm and character they contribute to the city.

Few structures are non-conforming under zoning, but some do not meet building and other code standards. Improvements in attractive old structures to meet code standards are to be encouraged in lieu of demolition.

The central business district is compact, includes basic retail and service establishments and is not yet suffering from a lack of vehicle parking spaces.

The central area plan includes a new city hall and park site, and an off-street parking plan for progressive development to meet future needs. The present city parking lot is proposed to be enlarged and to expose Francis Creek as a future landscaped scenic feature.

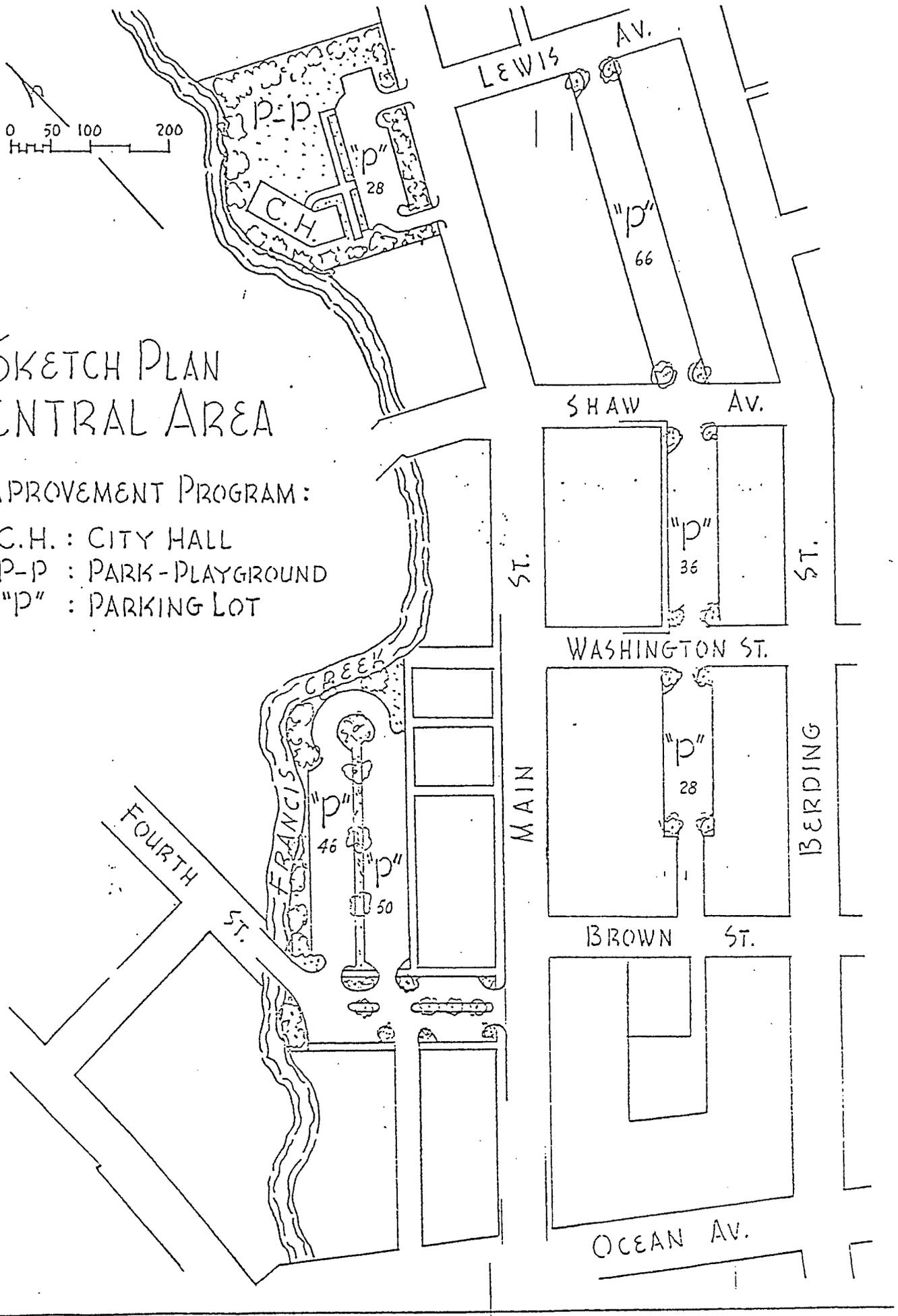
Other future parking lots between Main Street and Berding Street will utilize existing alleys and portions of adjoining lots. Arcades, through blocks from parking lots to business streets are possible means of adding commercial frontage and display areas.



# SKETCH PLAN CENTRAL AREA

## IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM:

- C.H. : CITY HALL
- P-P : PARK-PLAYGROUND
- "P" : PARKING LOT



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. City Subdivision Ordinance.

It is recommended that the Planning Commission and Council consider the preparation and adoption of a new subdivision ordinance based on the new draft prepared by the County Planning Department, which draft incorporates recently adopted revisions of the State Map Act and other laws pertaining to land division.

Adoption of County subdivision improvement standards in conjunction with the new ordinance will ensure coordination of improvements in and adjacent to the city.

### 2. Capital Improvements.

It is recommended that the Planning Commission and Council initiate preparation of a Capital improvement program, to be revised annually, and to be a program for land acquisition and major public improvement project construction based on a priority, time and cost schedule.

General Plan items to be included in such a program are as follows:

- a. City hall-park project, land acquisition.
- b. City hall-park project, staged construction, city offices building, and park developments.
- c. Present parking lot expansion, land acquisition.
- d. Present parking lot expansion, construction.
- e. Present parking lot expansion, landscaping.

- f. Future parking lots, land acquisition .
- g. Future parking lots, construction.
- h. Major Street improvements (coordinate with County roads projects when possible.
- i. Central area street tree planting, parking lot landscaping.

3. General Recommendations.

1. It is recommended that the General Plan be reviewed annually, and that it be revised as necessary to ensure that it will continue to serve as an effective guide for sound and orderly development.

2. It is further recommended that the General Plan be the basic guide for consideration of all zoning, subdivision and major improvements matters, and that technical advice be requested from the County Planning Department when needed in order that the plan and related ordinances may serve the city to their full potential.