

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

March 18, 1970

**Summary Report #1  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

On Tuesday, March 10, 1970, I visited Kalamazoo for the initiation of work on the new planning program for downtown. In the afternoon I met with Mr. Van Hasbrouk and we visited with Mr. James Caplinger, City Manager and Mr. Gerry Jauriska, City Planner at City Hall.

Our discussion revolved around the need to again initiate an active goal oriented downtown planning program that will result in positive improvement steps, both short term and long term for Kalamazoo. Both Mr. Caplinger and Mr. Jauriska emphasized the concern they have with achieving early results. They were pleased that private Kalamazoo groups were again initiating an active effort to assist and work with the City in the planning program.

Mr. Caplinger reviewed his philosophies of accomplishment to be strived for in Kalamazoo and reiterated the desire to do as much as possible within the private structure. He pointed out that the City Commission was well acquainted with the problems of Kalamazoo, and that generally the City Government and the City Commission were sympathetic and desirous of moving ahead of many fronts of planning and planning implementation. He offered his office's services in any way that would be positive and beneficial to the effort.

Mr. Caplinger asked that in the regular meetings I shall be having with Mr. Jauriska and others, that he be invited to participate on an occasional basis where decisions were being made or where major policy matters were being discussed. I feel this is a constructive offer and certainly should keep Mr. Caplinger informed of our progress.

After our joint meeting, I visited with Mr. Jauriska for some time in his office at the Planning Department. Here, he brought me up to date on activities in Kalamazoo both current and near past, as well as reviewing his immediate and moderate range planning ideas for the downtown.

Items of interest to him included enclosing the Burdick Mall, extending the pedestrian areas and most importantly, embarking on a Burdick Mall improvement program that would accomplish needed repairs and physical improvement over the next few months.

It was emphasized that this early planning should attempt to work within the City's capital budget and that we should not expect major assistance in the immediate future from any extralocal government agency. However, Mr. Jauriska pointed out that the county is interested in participating in

Summary Report #1  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

Page two

general planning efforts and that the program of action he is planning now depends upon participation of all levels of government. He reviewed his capital budgeting plan with me, and also went over the program he had prepared when first joining the City's staff. I also gathered considerable additional documentation which I shall study and incorporate into my thinking for the plan of work over the next few months.

I am going to meet with Mr. Jarriska and a DKA group on March 31, 1970, at an evening meeting to jointly review the goals, desires and aims of the DKA along with Mr. Jarriska. At this meeting we hopefully can begin some serious discussions about the role of the DKA and the various planning groups at the City, County, and State levels.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/dv

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

April 16, 1970

Summary Report #2

Downtown Kalamazoo Planning

Kalamazoo, Michigan

Date of Trips: Tuesday, March 31, 1970 and Wednesday, April 1, 1970.

Project: 70:3

~~Kalamazoo~~  
On Tuesday evening, March 31, 1970, I attended a meeting of the Downtown ~~Kalamazoo~~ Association committee, coordinating work within several related areas in Kalamazoo with the planning commission. The meeting was chaired by Roger Kooi and was attended by several people, including Mr. Gerald Jarriska, City Planner for Kalamazoo and Mr. James Caplinger, City Manager. In addition, several others attended who have been active in the work of the DKA over the past years. The purpose of the meeting was to continue meaningful, directional discussions about what could be mutually done about improving the physical environment of the City of Kalamazoo in conjunction with groups representing specific areas and meeting regularly with key personnel of the City.

There was considerable discussion about how heavily structured the group should be and it was generally agreed, for the time being, discussions should be carried on in an informal basis. The intent is to provide a forum for discussion which can lead to meaningful action in downtown planning efforts.

Each of the parties at the meeting had opportunities to air their viewpoints on how to proceed. Mr. Jarriska discussed the methodology, neighborhood involvement, and neighborhood organization. He further presented an article on the organization, function and objectives of a Kalamazoo Valley Planning Committee which he emphasized was for discussion only, not for public release. It was emphasized by several of those present, including Mr. Kooi, that although we are concerned with neighborhood development in the adjoining areas, that the prime purpose of the Downtown Kalamazoo Association and their current activities in planning, is to strengthen the downtown area and restudy the long and medium range planning objectives for this sector of the City.

I was asked for my views on this matter and reemphasized that basically I felt we must now concern ourselves with improvements in the central

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

Summary #2  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Page two

business district physical environment and to concentrate on these as objectives of our immediate activities. Primarily, we have decided to concentrate on improving the physical appearance of Burdick Mall and studying in some depth the possibility of enclosing the Mall. In addition, we will also intensify efforts to locate and begin planning for a City Activity Center. This is a program that Mr. Elton Ham is involved in with C. H. Mullen. There were some strong feelings expressed that we must not lose sight of our long range objectives and we must also continue to examine them to make certain our short term plans are developed within the context of a proper long range plan. This, I feel is a very necessary philosophical approach.

Presently, there appears to be about \$31,500 in the Capital Improvement budget to allow for immediate physical improvement of the downtown area. Funding considerations led to a discussion as to how additional funds could be made available and Mr. Caplinger said it was time we established an assessment approach by which we explored all of the possible techniques of using assessments of various types to obtain the funds necessary for downtown improvements.

The matter of street lighting was discussed and it was brought out that a program of lighting must accomplish two things; first provide an intensity and location sufficient to improve the security of those using downtown at night. Second, a lighting program must contribute materially to the beauty of the area, since it is closely tied to the appearance of the streets, shops and landscaping.

In view of the above, it was suggested that the City restudy the landscaping plans that Mr. O'Boyle prepared several years ago with an eye to updating them in the near future. I was asked to contact Mr. O'Boyle and I talked to him the next day. He agreed to meet with Mr. Caplinger and to offer whatever suggestions he could to assist the City in preparing an updated schematic mall plan.

The entire IKA meeting was very constructive and helpful. It most importantly pointed up to key members of the association, city staff members, and city commission members attending, the importance of working closely together to achieve a mutually desirable goal, good for Kalamazoo, the adjoining neighborhoods around downtown and downtown itself.

The next day, Wednesday, I spent considerable time with Mr. Dykema, discussing the feelings of downtown people about the updating program, and also, visiting some of the newer retail facilities in Kalamazoo to better evaluate their impact upon downtown. Later, I made a physical reconnaissance of the entire main sector of the downtown to begin establishing planning direction for a restudy of the area. It appears from this reconnaissance

Summary #2  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

Page three

that several features should be considered:

1. The use of private funds must play a larger role than over the last few years in improving and updating the downtown area. It is entirely possible, and it has been done in many cities, to utilize the private sector to encourage and implement programs of improvement provided they are done with the full cooperation and assistance of local governments.
2. Exploration of the development of major corridors between downtown and adjoining neighborhoods should be looked at in detail since adjoining neighborhood development has become an important part of the total development picture. I consider this to be especially pertinent for the corridors stretching out towards the two colleges, Western Michigan and Kalamazoo. A major market of the downtown is the college population of Kalamazoo, and perhaps in this replanning effort we should make a studied thrust toward improving accessibility of downtown to the college population. \*
3. Size of the planning units should be such that they are manageable and results are achievable over a short period of time. A study of how the downtown might be divided into areas for planning on this basis will be made in the early part of the replanning study. \*
4. Of critical importance to downtown and all neighborhoods surrounding is preparation of a major thoroughfare master plan. In conversations with Mr. Bob Carroll of the City Traffic Department, it was found that such studies are underway, but not scheduled for immediate completion and release. I feel we must urge the City in cooperation with available State Highway assistance to formulate and express their views and planning desires regarding Kalamazoo's major thoroughfares. It is only by having such a system of well planned thoroughfares that we can provide access to the downtown area from its trade area. \*
5. The planning and construction of a new activity center will be of major importance to downtown and should be a part of our replanning effort. This too, is tied closely to a restudy of the major thoroughfare plan and must also be an integral part of any land use or parking program put into work. \*
6. We must continue to encourage development opportunities sought by those both inside and outside Kalamazoo for the downtown area. Such information as is now being collected and was discussed by Roger Kooi is invaluable. In light of this, it is quite evident that some properties in the downtown area should be controlled on a positive and constructive basis by such a non-profit organization as the DMHC. Their past experience of holding such properties has proven fairly good in most cases and excellent in some. Therefore, \*

Summary Report #2  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

Page four

it still appears that this is a good vehicle by which land control can be exerted for the benefit of all parties in the neighborhood areas and in the downtown section.

The above points appear presently to be significant enough so I shall develop my program of replanning and reexamining the downtown plans toward achieving these objectives and concepts among others. This program will be broadened as it proceeds. However, the initial objective will lean toward establishing a program of action achievable within the next one to five years. In turn a second program will be developed that should be achievable within five to fifteen years. I expect that this work I shall do will be evolutionary in nature and that as it is presented and discussed with DKA members and other concerned individuals, it will be revised, reexamined and remolded to take on the earmarks of a valid program of planning and development action. \*

My next trip to Kalamazoo will be on Tuesday, April 21, 1970, and I shall plan to meet with the DKA Board of Directors at 3:30 P.M., and with the DKA planning committee at 8:00 P.M.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/dv

cc: Mr. G. Van Hamften (2)

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER  
May 14, 1970

**Summary Report #3**

**Project: 70:3**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Dates of Kalamazoo visits: April 21, 1970  
April 22, 1970  
May 1, 1970**

**Actions taken:**

- April 21, 1970**
- Attended afternoon meeting of IKA Board of Directors
  - Attended evening meeting of Downtown Kalamazoo Association neighborhood committee (the group chaired by Roger Kooi as a cooperating group with the City Planning Commission)
- April 22, 1970**
- Conferred with Ray Dykema and Bob O'Boyle re general downtown program
  - Continued visual reconnaissance of downtown to formulate immediate and moderate range planning efforts
- May 1, 1970**
- Met with various people including Bill Ripette, Bob O'Boyle and Bob Carroll to determine impact of recent changes on planning effort

**General Summary**

A major temporary impact was imposed upon the IKA program by the resignation of Gerald Jauriska, former Kalamazoo City Planner. Therefore, he did not attend the evening meeting of the Downtown Kalamazoo Planning Committee and Mr. Caplinger, City Manager, spoke for the Planning Department during the evening session on April 21. In the afternoon the meeting with the IKA Board of Directors was concerned with a general review of the concepts applicable to downtown Kalamazoo and the directions in which our planning efforts will be directed over the next few months.

Of importance to these efforts were topics discussed previous to my report by the attending members of the IKA.

- (1) They are concerned as good merchants with activities that will be of immediate value in improving their sales efforts.
- (2) They recognize, with the heavy weather we have had for the last few years, that such bad weather is a serious deterrent to high volume year-round sales. \*

Summary Report #3  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page two

- (3) They are concerned that some single or isolated sales promotion efforts are losing impact upon the market area for a variety of reasons.
- (4) They feel unanimously that a dramatic improvement to the existing mall would be a logical first step to re-establish its attractiveness to the entire Kalamazoo market. \*

In my discussion with the DKA Board, I felt the above points should be related to suggestions I might have for pursuing an aggressive plan of downtown improvement. We reviewed the following elements of such a planning program:

- (1) Immediate improvements to the entire Burdick Mall should include repaving, relandscaping and improved lighting (not necessarily based on higher intensity only). The improvement program should be carried on along with serious consideration and implementation of a plan for roofing and/or enclosing the mall either totally or in part. The enclosure should be such that it allows all-weather shopping for those who desire it. \*

Key points to be considered in enclosing are: structural connections with existing buildings; the nature of the overhead shell (should it be transparent, translucent or opaque?); the height of the shell; access of the mall to emergency vehicles; fire protection, and, the possibility of utilizing upper areas of the enclosure for additional retail or commercial space.

- (2) Separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic is still of prime importance to a good downtown plan. We should continue to stimulate improvement of the pedestrian circulation pattern so that safe, uninterrupted, pleasant foot travel is possible over large sections of the downtown area. \*
- (3) It is time to examine the functional inter-relationship of the very large downtown blocks to each other. For instance, the two blocks that interface at the Burdick Mall between Michigan Avenue and South Street could very well be developed into very beautiful and densely used commercial facilities. The Burdick Mall would provide a natural mutual connecting link for these two blocks. \*

Another example of a possible super block development would be the area bounded by Burdick, Michigan, Kalamazoo and Rose Streets. This is the Burdick Hotel site augmented by an extension to the north. Concentration on such super block developments could pinpoint and focus planning efforts within the private sector and allow mutually related programs to proceed somewhat independently of the total downtown improvement.

- (4) We must all continually step outside the downtown area of Kalamazoo and look at it as the visitor sees the central city area. Often the opportunity for small easily made improvements is not apparent as we grow accustomed to living and working in an environment. For example, the



small arcade leading from the Burdick Mall to the YWCA offers some unique opportunities for such development within developments. This arcade could be relatively easily enclosed, conditioned for year-round use and lined with small high rental shoppes to form a very nice mini-feature for downtown. As Ray Dytman put it "there probably are many such diamonds in the rough in the downtown area". \*

- (5) I reviewed the status of present thoroughfare planning in the entire Kalamazoo city. Little if anything is being actively done on the master thoroughfare plan; yet this program which sets access to all parts of the city for years to come is an integral part of any downtown planning program. We continually seem to get involved in a defunctment of such a program, waiting for this or that engineering study. Since the Traffic Department is also vitally concerned with this matter, and desirous of accomplishing a good master plan, the DKA should take every step possible to encourage immediate city staff participation in this important effort. \*

- (6) Improvement of marginal properties should occupy a high priority position with the DKA. For instance, it is important to create new and dynamic markets in or directly adjoining downtown. These could consist of new office buildings, transient lodging, high density residential, as well as the government complexes providing for city and county facilities, and the proposed activity center. Cultural facilities also can generate high density of use directly in downtown. The DKA may even consider an extension of its involvement in communicating with potential investors quickly and authoritatively about current development opportunities. Also, continuation of the LNU control program as practiced by the LNUC could assist greatly in providing appropriate and immediate development possibilities. \*

- (7) After years of difficult experiences trying to work with public funding, both local and federal, it may be time to recognize that the use of private funds must play a larger role than ever before in improving and updating downtown. Now is the time to get our financial, statistical and sales committees ready so when the money market loosens up (and it is bound to loosen at some time), we can make the best of the opportunities for development in downtown. \*

- (8) The DKA should concern itself with the absentee owner. \*

We are finding in downtown development that the absentee owner is often the major road-block to proper development of a program of action. Reasons may be poor communication, lack of interest, difficulty in assembling geographically dispersed votes of owners or many other reasons will know to most downtown property owners. The DKA should search for effective techniques of motivating its absentee downtown owners to take a more active participative role in downtown development.

(9) The corridors between downtown and adjoining neighborhoods, particularly to the north and west should be a subject of early consideration. I plan to investigate how these corridors might be improved as a part of my plan of work, and will periodically report on ideas I might have for their development. If they could be rehabilitated and redeveloped imaginatively to become natural and interesting pathways into the downtown area, much would be done to encourage greater use of the central city. \*

(10) Although parking is of prime importance, enough studies, restudies and re-restudies of parking have been done in Kalamazoo so that perhaps it is time to implement some of the findings of these various investigations.

I suggest that the action plans proposed be put into work if they have been found valid and that efforts be continued in consolidating and better planning for the lots for good internal circulation and use. Russ Powell, for example, has suggested that Water Street be closed from Burdick to Edwards and that the two lots now divided by Water be consolidated. Of course, it would require investigation of present traffic patterns on Water Street, but it is this kind of action that can be taken relatively fast and effectively that will help improve the parking situation.

I believe we have enough good information and suggestions on hand so that we can move aggressively on a parking program without injuring any long range planning we might do. Multi-deck facilities should be placed very carefully if used since they effectively remove the land they occupy from any other use by their single-use nature.

(11) The application of public relations and promotional programs in downtown has as a natural result of years of use become somewhat fixed in nature. The PCA should explore aspects of downtown that can be promoted, and deal with the multi-faceted nature of the central city community. For instance, the downtown is the heart of the city and contains recreational, cultural, governmental and many other kinds of facilities. An effort should be initiated to find ways of publicizing these other facilities. A powerful downtown program of action put into work is in itself a very effective promotional force and I suggest we capitalize on the new thrust to make downtown better for the Kalamazoo resident. \*

(12) The Activity Center is one of the key projects for the coming years. Several preliminary opinion surveys and functional studies have been made and it is now time to put the program into full work. There are strong interests in developing trades, exchanges and sales on properties that could well be used for the Activity Center location. It will take some tactful and knowledgeable business attention to get the program underway and I believe the environment is ripe now to start. \*

As mentioned earlier, money is currently expensive and construction activity down but this will not be the case indefinitely. Now is the time to prepare for the influx of new ideas and improvements. We must be ready to attract investment when money is available.

(13) Trends in doing business must be continually examined in light of the dynamic changes taking place in our society. For instance, we are currently finding the design trend is toward controllable and better secured environments where people who use the environment can be assured of comfort, convenience and safety. Thus, we are tending toward less secluded spaces, less large open and uncontrolled areas and more tightly controlled planning that assures such safety. On the other hand, we should realize in our planning that the trend will probably reverse itself and sometime in the future we will probably again be able to walk in safety on relatively unpoliced streets. Therefore, our planning must be flexible enough to be able to be changed when a more trustful environment is once again available. This is a very complex problem and perhaps is not critical to the planning of our new downtown Kalamazoo. Nevertheless, it is a point worthy of opinion. \*

(14) The discussion with the DKA Board was very significant in that it generated much enthusiasm among the younger business men in the downtown community. If these young people can maintain this feeling of enthusiasm and be encouraged to always look at the overall program within which the elements can be properly and correctly encouraged to grow, we can then give meaningful direction to both long range and short range planning efforts. If we do not comprehend the total picture, then we will continue month to month, feeding on the basic profit hunger and leaving the important self-actualization and philosophical improvement drive to wither. I feel this is a bad intellectual mistake and is an opinion shared by many more experienced members of the DKA. We must continue to motivate and encourage both young and old members to consider the planning and implementation as a dynamic and interesting program. \*

In the evening, the DKA Planning Committee met with Mr. Fran Hamilton, Mr. Jim Caplinger and members of Mr. Caplinger's staff. We reviewed several concepts of immediate improvements that Mr. Caplinger felt could be initiated in the downtown area. The discussion was somewhat handicapped by the resignation that day of Mr. Jaurich and although many good points were brought out, the lack of a Planning Director may handicap quick implementation of a program of downtown improvements. I suggest that the problem of planning direction be given prompt attention by the City Manager and all others who are influential in establishing good continuity in governmental operations.

The following points were brought out during this evening's discussion:

- a) Mr. Caplinger first reviewed his philosophy about downtown improvements stating that he believes the central business area is the heart of the city and is a viable commercial district in which should be developed moderately long range plans in close conjunction with now activities that will achieve the long range plans. In other words, develop a strategy to be achieved by day to day, week to week tactics.
- b) Mr. Caplinger stated the subjects of the evening would be street lighting, paving and services to downtown facilities. He requested his department heads to discuss each in order.
- c) Mr. Tom Fricke reviewed the street lighting program, speaking of light levels, costs, and placement of fixtures in the mall. A basic question here is whether we desire only a higher intensity of lighting or whether it is critical for proper redesign of the mall to concentrate on intensity and pattern of lighting along with placement of the fixtures, as well as the physical shape of the fixtures. Bob O'Boyle commented that it was important to consider all factors in any lighting situation since intensity only is not a sole determinant of effectiveness.

It was also pointed out that the present lighting level in the courts and malls of Kalamazoo is probably about 2 foot candles. It would be desirable to raise this to between 3 and 5 keeping in mind that as the intensity of lighting increases on the street, show window lighting becomes a more and more important part of the total mall impression.

Mr. Caplinger said that the city would bear the extra operating expense that might be imposed by additional or improved lighting. However, it is expected that downtown occupants will pay the cost of fixtures through an assessment program. Present cost estimates are in the range of \$40,000 to \$60,000 for fixtures. This seems like a low figure but will be checked in more detail later.

- d) Mr. Donald Swets and Mr. Nick Kik reviewed repaving of the mall and revising and updating the landscaping. They estimate that paving costs will range between \$1.50 to \$1.80 per square foot and anticipate replacing the existing paving in total with new and different kinds of surfaces. Total costs might be as high as \$80,000 to \$100,000 that would be chargeable to downtown occupants.

The paving program came in for a great amount of discussion and it was generally agreed that the landscaping and paving plan submitted by the city had merit. However, it was also realized that it was prepared without consultation with Mr. O'Boyle who has previously done considerable work in replanning the landscaping for downtown areas. Thus, since the new plan is geared closely to the existing plan, the group requested that Mr. O'Boyle, Mr. Kik and Mr. Swets develop some alternate plans to generate more retail oriented circulation patterns and also provide a new appearance for the mall taking into account paving, landscaping

and lighting.

Rehabilitation and remodeling of the mall will probably start at the Water Street end and move south. It is hoped to put this program into the field by June or July so it can be completed by September. It is a very ambitious program but one that is desired by everyone provided an acceptable plan is conceived and used.

- e) I quickly reviewed the basic concepts that brought about development of the mall, explaining the double exposure to be achieved by allowing free circulation within the connecting spaces between the two sides of the landscaped areas. This as opposed to a one side exposure caused when a street separates the store fronts as a major road. It is important to maintain this good retail strolling circulation pattern and to encourage a free visual interchange between both lines of store fronts.
- f) Mr. Caplinger stated that with the program of improvement work underway, parking lot lighting improvement this year will have to stay at about the same expenditure level as right now. However, he pointed out that by fall if things have gone well financially, it may be possible to re-examine this program for implementation.
- g) The afternoon discussion at the DKA Board of Directors' meeting was reviewed briefly and a high priority set on enclosing or roofing the Burdick Mall. This study is my responsibility and I shall work on this as a critical item. Also of high priority is development of a major thoroughfare plan and a preliminary study of the corridors linking the Patterson neighborhood, the campus neighborhood and the central business district.
- h) Additional high enthusiasm was generated by this meeting and I thought it was well handled and constructive. The tone of the meeting was reminiscent of the early enthusiastic efforts to initiate an effective downtown planning project. If we can keep this kind of high spirit among all age groups in the DKA, we shall soon see results.

The next day I devoted the morning to visual reconnaissance of several outlying areas of Kalamazoo and also traveled the Patterson neighborhood in some depth checking into the current state of improvement rehabilitation and redevelopment there. I believe that a link to a healthy neighborhood from downtown is desirable to encourage. It must be kept in mind, however, that the link as well as the end points to be linked must all be healthy for the total assembly to be healthy. I believe that with the improvements that obviously are being made, and have been made, to the Patterson neighborhood, that within the next two years this connecting corridor should be concentrated upon. It will have

Summary Report #3  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page eight

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

the dual purpose of assisting adjacent neighborhoods to improve, as well as stimulate interest in the north end of the downtown.

On May 1st I spent a good portion of the day in Kalamazoo to determine the continued impact of the changes in city hall operations caused by the resignation of Mr. Jursiska and subsequent events. Although things are in a somewhat mobile state at the present time, it is my recommendation that we proceed on this program just as we have started and assume that things which are being discussed and agreed to will be carried out as planned.

On my visit I talked with Bob O'Boyle at some length and he has agreed to meet whenever possible with Mr. Caplinger or whomever Mr. Caplinger designates as in charge of the landscape planning for the Burdick Mall. Mr. O'Boyle has some concern about imposing his services on the city, but nevertheless recognizes that he also wants to have something done properly in the downtown area that will be good for Kalamazoo and good for the Burdick Mall. Therefore, he will make every effort to assist however he might within the time limitations imposed upon him.

In a conversation with Mr. O'Boyle on May 7th he mentioned he had been unable up to that time to get together with anyone from the city staff. However, on that day he had arranged a meeting with Don Swets. Mr. O'Boyle was going to get back to me but has not had the opportunity as yet so I will chat with him on my next trip to Kalamazoo.

Bob also mentioned that in informal conversations with several architect friends of his that there is strong interest on the part of the architectural community to participate in this overall improvement program, particularly when it involves the structure to enclose the Burdick pedestrian area. I told Bob we would be delighted to have any competent professional assistance that was available, and asked him informally to mention to these people that yes, we were interested and delighted to have their concern about the downtown area. I shall investigate this further and if it seems to be the proper thing to do, develop a method by which we can mutually participate with such a group in these improvements requiring architectural design, understanding and handling.

The next meeting is an evening conference of the downtown Kalamazoo Planning Committee on Tuesday, May 12, in Kalamazoo. At this time we are to review progress made in the detail planning for summer improvements to the mall.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/n

To: Mr. G. Van Herten  
Mr. R. Dykens  
Mr. I. Gilmore

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

May 20, 1970

**Summary Report #4**

**Project: 7013**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Date of Kalamazoo visit: May 12, 1970**

**Actions taken:**

- **Attended evening meeting of Downtown Kalamazoo Association neighborhood committee**

**General Summary**

**Those attending the meeting included:**

**Rod Benson, Chamber of Commerce  
Phil Geymest, Planning Department  
Tim Kuether, Planning Department  
Larry Harris, Parks & Recreation Department  
Nick Kik, Parks and Recreation Department  
Don Swets, City Engineer  
Tom Fricke, City of Kalamazoo  
Jim Caplinger, City Manager  
Bruce Watts, County Planning Director  
Gordis Rogers, Associate of Mr. O'Boyle  
Bob O'Boyle, Landscape architect  
Bob Goldacker  
Roger Kool  
Irving Gilmore  
Floyd Greenberg  
Elton Ham  
Judd Knapper  
Fran Hamilton**

**The following points were covered:**

**(1) Mall Improvements**

**Larry Harris, landscape architect for the city of Kalamazoo presented a revised landscape plan for improvement of Burdick Mall. This plan was critiqued by Bob O'Boyle and a major discussion ensued upon its merits and shortcomings. The plan represents, particularly in the north mall, considerable improvement and relaxing of the theme over the initial plan presented three weeks ago. Also there have been some efforts to bring the landscaping into a heavier third dimension by raising planting areas to various elevations.**

(1) Mall Improvements (Cont.)

Mr. Harris emphasized the importance of ultimately bridging South Street and Michigan Avenue with the mall, and particularly improving the alleys off the main pedestrian route.

Unfortunately Mr. O'Boyle did not have the opportunity to participate fully with the Parks and Recreation Department in the preparation of the plan. It had been the intent for him to work with the Department but because of the press of time and late preparation of drawings, Mr. O'Boyle did not converse with Larry Harris until Monday, May 11, 1970. Even at that late date they were able to resolve some of their ideas regarding the landscaping of the north mall.

Some discussion was conducted regarding the possibility of building only the north mall this year, observing it, and then next year completing the rehabilitation of the middle and south malls. However, almost unanimously the people at the meeting felt that we should embark upon the entire program this year. It does not appear presently that plans can be prepared and the program put into construction in anything less than three months from now. However, it was also agreed that the area must be properly designed. Therefore, it was decided that Mr. O'Boyle and his associates, along with the Department of Parks and Recreation would jointly do the design work. It might be possible that Mr. O'Boyle's fee could come out of the general assessment as a part of the capitalization of the program.

It is difficult to accurately estimate costs for this rehabilitation program at present. Figures range anywhere from \$150,000 through \$300,000. However, since many of the administrative procedures that must be cleared away do not necessarily depend upon having accurate cost figures, these elements should be accomplished as quickly as possible. By dovetailing design, administrative processing and perhaps even some of the construction, it should be possible to get a major part of the mall rehabilitation program into the field by the time winter weather sets in.

(2) Maintenance

A report on snow removal and cleaning maintenance for the mall was given by Nick Kik. An estimate was made that it would run \$4 to \$5 per front foot for such snow brushing and cleaning per year. Also, evaluated along with this maintenance cost was the cost per front foot for the assessment to construct improvements to the mall. It appears that these could be amortized over a period of 10 to 15 years and paid in the same manner as would be the maintenance fee. Mr. Caplinger will make further studies on this matter.

(3) Activity Center

Elton Egan gave a brief report on the activity center survey. It was requested by Roger Kooi that some statement in the way of a public relations or information release be prepared and given to the newspapers



(3) Activity Center (Cont.)

so that citizens of Kalamazoo are aware of the work that is going on in the activity center program. It was decided that this matter should be discussed again by the Activity Center Committee prior to any action being taken. I shall be in touch with Elton Ham on this to plan the next steps.

(4) Thoroughfare Plan

I urge that the thoroughfare plan be given strong consideration for immediate work since the various elements that make up a successful downtown depend to a large extent upon traffic movement to and from the area. Mr. Bruce Watts said that he is working with the State Highway Department on several models from which they will derive a basic master thoroughfare plan for Kalamazoo. He urged that we work with him in maintaining liaison with the State Highway Department. Mr. Caplinger suggested that in relationship to the thoroughfare plan and the activity center that we work with Bruce Watts through Don Swets. Elton Ham and I will initiate these contacts in the near future.

The meeting, as have been the other two I have attended, was very constructive and much progress was made. I continue to be impressed by the dynamic role that this committee has begun to play, and most especially by the cooperation and enthusiasm shown from city staff members and management in improving the mall. It is a healthy attitude, one which can't help but generate a valid program of improvements.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. R. Dykes  
Mr. I. Gilmore

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

June 3, 1970

**Summary Report #5**

**Project: 7013**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Date of Kalamazoo visit: May 25, 1970 and May 26, 1970**

**Actions taken:**

- **Conferred with Floyd Greenburg and Elton Ham re current and proposed downtown activities**
- **Attended evening meeting of city commission**
- **Met with Ned Benson of the Chamber of Commerce, Hayden Bradford of the Gazette and Mr. McKean of the Upjohn Institute**

This was a visit to continue downtown planning work and to attend the city commission meeting. I also initiated discussions with Floyd Greenburg to determine how to more deeply involve the IKA in the downtown improvement program. I talked to Mr. Greenburg at length and we developed some ideas that I am putting forth in a letter to him.

I discussed the Activity Center with Elton Ham. Elton said that he is now putting the survey results into final, narrative form. These will be ready for distribution in the near future. The Activity Center continues to be a focal point of great potential and I believe now is the time to make a move in the direction of establishing a definitive program for its design and construction. We should think of the Activity Center not only as a location for certain government facilities, or as an athletic plant, or as a convention facility, but, as its name implies, - an activity area, where various kinds of community programs can be held. We also should do our grand planning on this Activity Center early and acquire sufficient land to keep initial developments within the context of a total complex.

With public attitude being what it is currently, we may have to start with a relatively small amount of construction. This might mean a few meeting rooms and some open areas for indoor and outdoor community activity events. By starting on a modest basis, a gradual evolution of healthy facilities around the Activity Center could be encouraged.

There is considerable talk presently of minority business men being encouraged to construct and operate business facilities. It might be that this could happen around the Activity Center and the two could mutually generate a new business area in the downtown.

I also continue to feel that the corridor concept is important where we open the downtown to adjoining neighborhoods through well-designed avenues of approach, particularly from the north and the west. This corridor does not necessarily have to be all commercial or all of any single use - it could be composed of several different kinds of businesses or even some attractive and well planned walking areas.

In the evening I attended the city commission meeting. It was rather pleasant and impressive to see a rational and studied approach to the discussion and administration of city government. I hope the commission will continue to be positive and constructive in its approach.

Tuesday morning I met with Rod Benson, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, and discussed how the efforts of the Chamber might be more effectively worked with those of the PCA to help stimulate downtown improvement. Mr. Benson is very interested in downtown Kalamazoo and I feel, can become a strong ally if we give him a method by which he can serve his own membership while still assisting the PCA. I suggested that perhaps a series of newsletters from the Chamber discussing the Kalamazoo community would be appropriate. After a short consideration of this, it became apparent that the scope of such a series would be far beyond the capabilities of the Chamber newsletter. Rod suggested I talk to the Gazette editorial staff so I contacted Hayden Bradford and asked him if the Gazette would be interested. The series could be entitled "Anatomy of a County" and in a sequence of illustrated discussions would cover the central city, the urban neighborhoods, the rural community, the suburbs and the nearby municipalities in Kalamazoo County. Within each geographical unit would be discussed the various functional elements such as manufacturing, commercial, retail, government, social, health, cultural, educational, professional, transportation and other such influences upon each of the segments. My purpose in approaching Rod Benson and the Gazette was to get underway an effort by the communication agencies to disseminate information that would help people in Kalamazoo County better understand the interrelationship of the various community elements. Rod thought the idea was excellent but frankly admitted he didn't have either the time or presently, the staff capability to do such an extensive series. He said he would be delighted to take background material generated by someone else and put it together, suggesting I might approach the Upjohn Institute. Therefore, I went to the Institute where I was referred to Mr. Eugene C. McKean who was also interested in the subjects but didn't know if they could involve themselves in such a study at the present time. However, he promised to discuss it with Mr. Samuel Bennett, Acting Director of the Upjohn Institute and other staff members. I believe there is great merit in initiating such a study to help knit the various sectors of the Kalamazoo area together. I shall continue to follow this matter and wherever it can be encouraged, shall do so.

Before leaving Kalamazoo on Tuesday, I had a conversation with Roger Keel in which we discussed the interrelationship of the various neighborhood programs that he is trying to initiate as Chairman of the Planning Commission. This effort that Roger is making is excellent and I think that his enthusiasm and concern for pulling together the loose ends of many elements in the community

**Summary Report #5  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page three**

**RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER**

**will bear fruit and give a direct benefit to the central city area over a period of time.**

**I shall plan to be in Kalamazoo next on June 2nd to attend the evening meeting of the neighborhood downtown group.**

**Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.**

**RJS/n**

**To: Mr. G. Van Braften  
Mr. R. Lyman  
Mr. I. Gilmore**

June 9, 1970

**Summary Report #6**

**Project: 70:3**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Date of Kalamazoo visit: June 2, 1970**

**Actions taken:**

- Reviewed transportation plan element for Kalamazoo County
- Began preparing physical plan concepts for downtown Kalamazoo
- Attended EKA neighborhood planning meeting

**General Summary**

During this visit I talked to Bruce Watts, County Planning Director, in some detail about what has been accomplished on the transportation master plan as a part of the comprehensive planning program for the county. Mr. Watts gave me the master transportation plan dated May 1970 and I spent a good share of the day reviewing it and plotting the key elements of the suggested program on base map overlays. As I understand it, the program is next submitted to the State Highway Department for review and analysis. After the SHD evaluation the data is assimilated into a suggested master thoroughfare plan which then forms the basis of detailed discussions between the Highway Department, the county and the municipal authorities within Kalamazoo County.

This, of course, is a long, tedious process, - one that bears expediting to the greatest extent possible. It is my personal and professional opinion that our next major thrust must be to get into work a comprehensive thoroughfare planning program backed up by an equally comprehensive implementation program. The various agencies that might be involved in the studies include:

- a) city traffic department
- b) city public works department
- c) city planning department
- d) county planning department
- e) state highway department

It is necessary to establish a working relationship among all of these parties, so as to insure that each is planning with the other in concert. I shall take steps in succeeding visits to Kalamazoo, as well as by intermediate correspondence and discussions, to determine the avenues by which we can move such a program ahead as rapidly as possible.

This matter was brought up at the evening meeting of the EKA neighborhood planning committee, and the group was made aware of the importance of the thoroughfare study. Once we have made physical improvements to the mall and even roofed or enclosed the pedestrian areas, we are confronted with design problems of which communication and traffic circulation are two of the most critical. This circulation can be determined only if good consensus direction between the municipalities, the county, and the state is agreed upon and worked toward.

In the evening I attended the regular meeting of the Downtown Kalamazoo Association Neighborhood Planning Committee at which detail presentations were made of the mall landscaping and improvement plan. Larry Harris and Nick Elisk of the Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with Bob O'Boyle, Duane Burling and Gordon Rogers of Robert O'Boyle Associates jointly made the presentation. It appears many of the philosophical differences that had appeared earlier in our planning efforts regarding mall design and landscaping have been resolved. The city and Mr. O'Boyle's organization now are speaking in the same terms and the plans as presented represent a marked achievement in degree of excellence over what had been discussed previously. Everyone was pleased with the material and it has been decided to proceed to determine costs, establish financing techniques and move into construction at an early date, preferably before the end of July 1970. It is still the intent to complete revamping of all three sections of the mall by cold weather of 1970. This appears to be an ambitious target but it might be wise to leave it as a goal so that the constant urgency of an end date is kept before everyone.

Most significant was a detailed treatment that the planning department in conjunction with Mr. Harris presented regarding the small alleys and by-ways that branch off from the mall. It is proposed that each of these be treated in a complimentary fashion to the malls and in some cases, be enclosed as initial steps toward total enclosure of the major Kalamazoo Mall.

There are still some concerns about the total cost of the program and an effort is being made now to keep the target per year per front foot assessment in the range from \$10 to \$20. The program of education, information and selling to those who must pay the bill will be a personal matter directed and participated in to a major extent by the EKA under the direction of Mr. Greenburg. Elton Ham should also be involved in this since he has a wealth of experience, gained on the first mall construction several years ago. Cost estimates still range from \$200,000 to \$300,000 of which, of course, the city share will have to be determined.

**Summary Report #6**  
**Downtown Milwaukee Planning**  
**Page three**

**RALPH J. STEPHENSON**  
**CONSULTING ENGINEER**

To make the project salable, it would be wise to prepare an information package by which each person affected could be made aware of the total program. This would be best delegated as a responsibility of Mr. Greenburg and the DKA.

As part of the evening agenda Mr. Keuther of the Planning Department reviewed progress on the new parking deck between Rose Street, Water Street, Michigan Avenue and Park Avenue. It is planned to prepare a writeup on the deck and to display the description, along with a rendering in the mall kiosk. This is an excellent idea and is part of the downtown public relations program which is to be encouraged.

Further evening discussions dealt with the next type of program to be embarked upon for the Central District. Roger Koci solicited general comments, and it was suggested that we think about these programs but concentrate for now upon the mall improvement.

I believe that we should consider many different concepts for our downtown areas, including moving sidewalks between the close-in neighborhoods, central shipping and receiving facilities servicing interior areas by underground tunnels and of course, as the thoroughfare plan develops, extending the pedestrian areas made available by shifting major traffic movements from downtown arteries. Conceptually we should begin thinking about how to move all service traffic to the outer fringes of downtown. Of course, we must also consider how we might move personal vehicular traffic out from the core. If a major thoroughfare plan is developed and proper circulation routes selected for major traffic movements, the efforts to be concentrated upon regarding the core area of the central city revolve around what type of circulation we want to develop within major feeder and dispersing loops. This is critical not only for the present downtown occupants but also to the proper location of future major facilities including the Activity Center.

It appears from general discussion that most people in the DKA Neighborhood Planning Group are thinking about the northeast quadrant of the central city for an Activity Center location. This project has come up for discussion several times over the last few weeks and Elton Ham is now completing his summary of opinion survey results. We will take these when they are available, evaluate them and lay out a program of action by which we can proceed to specifically locate and design an Activity Center.

**Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.**

**RJS/a**

**To: Mr. G. Van Braften**  
**Mr. R. Byham**  
**Mr. I. Gilmore**

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER  
July 8, 1970

**Summary Report #7**

**Project: 70:3**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Date of Kalamazoo Visit: June 29 and June 30, 1970**

**Actions taken:**

- Conferred with Bob Carroll regarding major thoroughfare plan
- Discussed thoroughfare plan with Tim Kueher and Don Swets
- Continued physical planning of downtown
- Continued survey of downtown areas
- Conferred with Mr. Floyd Greenburg re DKA participation in downtown planning
- Conferred with Elton Ham re characteristics of Activity Center
- Attended evening DKA neighborhood planning meeting

**General Summary**

This visit was to continue downtown planning, particularly as it related to the thoroughfare plan. I conferred at length with Bob Carroll, Traffic Engineer for the City of Kalamazoo and with Tim Kueher, Acting Planning Director. We were able to arrive at some major concepts of how traffic ultimately might flow in the downtown sector. However, for any comprehensive plan to be prepared that is capable of implementation, it will be necessary to gain the cooperation of the State Highway Department and participate with the Planning Department of the County. Mr. Carroll, at my request, had a long conversation with Mr. Fred Sanborn who is in the Planning Division of the State Highway Department. Mr. Sanborn said that the State now has all the necessary information from which they can derive their initial locations for main arterials. However, they are in the process of negotiating a contract with the Voorhes Consulting organization and will not be able to start planning until this contract is set. It should be consummated sometime into this month.

Mr. Sanborn said he would be willing to talk informally to me and I shall plan to meet with him in Lansing sometime soon. Meanwhile, the tentative major circulation routes that Bob Carroll and I discussed were reviewed with Tim Kueher and with Don Swets. Both agreed that they have merit. I shall



RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

Summary Report #7  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page two

proceed with these routes delimiting the outside boundaries of the central business district and develop an internal plan consistent with these tentative boundaries. This represents a major step forward since we are somewhat assured, in a technical sense, of support from staff agencies in Kalamazoo. The staff managers are very important people and their backing is significant in that it gives us a technical base from which we can proceed confidently. This is particularly true now with an alert, aggressive administration in the city that is concerned with maintaining continued health of downtown.

Once the Voorhes firm is retained, Mr. Sambers suggested that we have a comprehensive meeting between his department, the State Highway Department, the county and the city, involving all persons who are concerned with thoroughfare planning. The purpose of this meeting will be to provide data to allow detailed thoroughfare planning to proceed, taking into account the local desires of the city and the county.

On Tuesday morning I met with Floyd Greenburg to discuss the points covered in my letter to him of June 8, 1970. Results were as follows:

- Newsletter

It was decided to publish a short, concise, one page newsletter on a more or less regular basis to keep IEA members and others informed about what is happening in downtown. Possible subjects include:

- Thoroughfare planning
- BEHC parking lot
- Corridor concepts
- Landscaping concepts
- Overall progress reports
- Fund raising
- Program goals, long and short range
- Collateral development around CBD
- Parking progress
- Activity Center
- Mall extensions
- CEA economic development
- Program time schedule

After considerable discussion, it was tentatively decided (subject to Mr. Greenburg's review) that the first newsletter would deal with this year's plan of action for downtown. In it Greeny will briefly discuss and outline the one year plan for renovation, thoroughfare studies, industrial areas, BEHC lots, the partial completion of new ramp garage and the full opening of the Industrial State Bank.

- Absentee Ownership of Downtown Properties

Mr. Greenburg has begun to collect data regarding absentee ownership of downtown property. He is also working with Elton Egan and the trust department of the bank to insure as great accuracy as possible. Mean-

while, he will consider a program by which these absentee owners might become more involved in the improvement of downtown and be kept aware of what is happening in Kalamazoo.

- **Public Relations**

We discussed the possibility of doing some institutional advertising for the downtown through advertisers who have space in the Gazette. Greeny said his budget will not allow separate advertising programs to be conducted for the IEA. Therefore, it was decided that we would approach members of the IEA to contribute a part of their advertising space, perhaps twice a year or more, in which the downtown would be publicized to the shopper and customer. Also, as part of this institutional advertising, continuing emphasis on the private character of the downtown improvement program can be made. Greeny will follow this through.

- **Available Downtown Land and Properties**

A compilation of investment opportunities in the downtown area will be made as soon as more information has been obtained on ownership of downtown property. Greeny will start on this when the other information is in such form as to be useful. I suggested he set up a card tickler file on every available investment opportunity publicly known, and privately known if possible, in downtown for use of potential investors.

- **Thoroughfare Plan**

Greeny and I reviewed my discussions with Bob Carroll, Tim Knother and Don Swets the day before. I outlined to him the general boundaries of the planning work. We discussed the possibility of corridor improvement to Western, Kalamazoo College and the Paterson neighborhood. These will be reviewed by Greeny and I will be talking to him at more length about the character of such corridors.

- **Where Is Downtown?**

It is important to encourage IEA members to improve access and usability of their downtown area. For instance, I asked Greeny how an out-of-towner could find the Mall, or for that matter of fact, how could he find the downtown area when he came to town. When he got there, how does he find the parking lots and the stores? These elements are extremely important and people who live and do business in Kalamazoo tend to forget that many others do not know exactly where to go and how to find the downtown section.

It would be good to solicit ideas from the IEA members as to how the approaches and the corridors and pathways into downtown can be identified and improved. To assist in the effort, I have prepared a small 8 1/2 x 11 map of the downtown area (provided courtesy of the

Kalamazoo Planning Department) and have sent Greeny 100 copies of this for distribution to members of the EKA. On this map the members should begin jotting down their ideas about how they would like to see the Central Business District upgraded and made a better place in which to do business.

• Activity Center

At noon I had lunch with Elton Ham and we discussed the Activity Center in great detail. The character of this center is still somewhat fuzzy and difficult to define, although it appears that we should be thinking seriously of various sizes of meeting rooms, transient lodging facilities, good eating and drinking places (in wide variety), as well as workshops and display and exhibit areas of a moderate size, to accommodate large numbers of people working individually and in small groups. The entire center, of course, would be landscaped beautifully, have adequate parking and should be easily, conveniently and safely accessible to a large segment of the population.

After discussing the tentative thoroughfare plan and its relation to the Activity Center, Elton and I did a physical reconnaissance of the north sectors of downtown. Here it became apparent that improvements that could be made easily would be making Kalamazoo and Eleanor as a one-way pairing with Eleanor running through and hooking into either Kalamazoo or Michigan at the far eastern boundary of downtown. This, in turn, might open up the possibility of the Activity Center being located in the block between Kalamazoo and Eleanor and extending from about Rose Street on across to the east as far as necessary. We probably will need about 15 acres of land for the Center and even though the linear shape of the one block sector between Kalamazoo and Eleanor may work against an optimum plan, the area seems to be adequate in size for at least a starting development of this nature. A further possibility suggested by Don Swets, although not specifically for the Activity Center but for the area between Eleanor and Kalamazoo, is to use the Arendia drain which is a clean, storm water drain, to provide a pleasant stream of running water. The Activity Center would be built around the stream which could be redesigned and engineered to give both fast running water and quieter moving streams. This sounds like a good idea and could make the location very desirable. Actually, this same approach could be used no matter where the Activity Center was located in the north or northeast sector of downtown. This Arendia drain should be explored in detail for use as a design element in the northern sector improvement.

On Tuesday evening I attended the EKA neighborhood planning meeting which dealt with a discussion of the Commission's decision the evening before to proceed with the mall improvement program. Bob O'Boyle and his associates,

**Summary Report #7  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page five**

**RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER**

along with Larry Harris and Nick Kik made additional presentations. A public hearing is scheduled for Monday, July 20, at the City Commission meeting, and immediately after this meeting and approval, construction will start on the basic Mall elements. It will take additional time to design the structures and above ground elements. However, this design work can be going on while construction is underway. It will be important to have as much downtown people strength in numbers at the July 20th meeting as is possible.

This program is critical not only to those people on the Mall but to everyone in the downtown area since the Mall improvement program underway now is the key that will unlock a total program for complete central business district improvement over the coming years.

A brief discussion was held regarding extension of the Kalamazoo Mall one block north to the south right-of-way line of Eleanor Street on Bardick. This is estimated to cost about \$50,000 more than the \$300,000 available for improvement of the three present blocks of pedestrian area. I recommended that if it could be done, it be a part of the 1970 program. Roger Kosi will look into this and see what can be done to encourage it this year.

All in all, the plan of action is moving well and if we can get well into the three or four block mall improvement this year, we should be able to continue momentum on into our total program of planning for the entire downtown during the next several years.

**Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.**

**RJS/m**

**To: Mr. G. Van Haaften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. F. Greenburg**

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER  
September 9, 1970

**Summary Report #8**

**Project: 7013**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Date of visit: September 3, 1970**

**Actions taken:**

- Conferred with concerned parties re Burdick Hotel property
- Continued physical reconnaissance and planning
- Reviewed activity center status with Elton Ham

**Summary**

A part of this trip was spent evaluating the position of the Burdick Hotel property in respect to the future of downtown. The parcel is critical to the northwest sector of the central business district and its use could greatly influence the entire development surrounding it.

There apparently is a need, fluctuating from time to time, but nevertheless somewhat constant over the years, for a good downtown transient lodging facility. However, this facility must, in my opinion, be built, maintained and operated in conjunction with other facilities that generate a desire to come downtown on the part of the traveler, as well as the local resident. For this reason, it becomes important to establish a major theme or purpose in downtown other than merely serving the commercial and business function that it now does. There are several such themes that have existed in Kalamazoo for many years; the city and county buildings provide a basic purpose for the downtown and Kalamazoo is fortunate in that it has retained its prime government functions downtown.

Another significant element that has contributed to the health of downtown is the rich cultural and church life that is encouraged by the presence of many institutional buildings in the central city area. It would seem also that education over the past few years and also in the foreseeable future will play a dominant role in Kalamazoo's development. The aim now is to tie these together so that the healthy growth characteristics generated by each of these kinds of uses is channeled into good planning for the future.

Summary Report #8  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page two

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

I have now begun the actual physical projections for downtown Kalamazoo and intend to study this northwest sector, both in relationship to cultural activities in Kalamazoo, as well as to the activity center and the ultimate use of Water Street.

The main sector of downtown presently being considered consists of a prime CBD area bounded by Park on the west, Walnut on the south, Portage and Edwards on the east and Eleanor on the north. The outer boundaries of the CBD, which encompass a secondary central city strip between it and the prime CBD is outlined by Westnedge on the west, Vine on the south, the same Portage and Edwards on the east and Kalamazoo on the north. In conversations with the State Highway Department, with local traffic agencies and with Kalamazoo city staff, these boundaries appear to be valid within which to work on a technical basis also. Therefore, the efforts now will be to plan the future of the areas encompassed within these prime and secondary business district sectors.

#### New Mall Construction

The construction of the new North Burdick Mall is underway. Progress is slightly behind schedule but I am pleased that a fast start has been made in this construction and believe that the new areas will contribute materially to an exciting new look for the downtown area.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

September 28, 1970

Summary Report #9

Project: 70:3

Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Date of Visit: September 15, 1970

Actions taken:

- Conferred with Don Carlson, staff writer for the Gazette
- Continued physical reconnaissance and planning
- Attended evening meeting of DKA Planning Committee

Summary

A portion of this visit was spent reviewing the cultural features of Kalamazoo with Don Carlson of the Kalamazoo Gazette. It has become increasingly apparent as planning proceeds for Kalamazoo's CBD that we should look for themes which typify the Kalamazoo community, and can be incorporated into planning for Kalamazoo's downtown. Some of these themes are natural; others must be encouraged by public or private development. Of the outstanding features reviewed to this early point, culture, education, government and Kalamazoo's economic base seem to be the most prominently mentioned.

In reviewing the needs of Kalamazoo for additional cultural facilities, Mr. Carlson first pointed out that the present facilities are being used to do an outstanding job of serving the cultural needs of Kalamazoo. The Art Center, the Civic Theater, the Carver Center and facilities at the universities all contribute greatly to providing cultural outlets for Kalamazoo residents. Mr. Carlson did not necessarily feel that a new grouping of functional buildings, such as might be included in a downtown Activity Center, should duplicate cultural facilities which may already exist. He did, however, feel that we might call the new building complex a City Center and in it could be held continuing but temporary activities such as concerts, shows, conferences, and special features such as art shows, flea markets and antique shows. Around the City Center we could encourage the placement of additional commercial developments and transient residential facilities, all designed to make a great contribution to the city's downtown activity style.

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

Summary Report #9  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two

Mr. Carlson also feels there is a strong need for an improved community theater and a new motion picture house in the downtown area. The community theater, particularly, was a subject of our conference since the Civic Playhouse, although still utilized heavily and very busy, is not totally suitable for all kinds of stage activities that are possible to hold today. He suggested if a new theater were to be built that it contain not only a proscenium type theater, but what they call a thrust type in which the stage projects out into the audience. A theater of this nature, he felt, could be combined very nicely with a City Center and could be tied into a variety of boutiques, eating places and other commercial establishments.

It is my feeling that there are some additional areas of cultural activity that could be explored. They might relate to the various dominant industries of Kalamazoo such as the study and practice of typography as a graphic art and its relationship to the paper making business or the development of new and different concepts of college level education. These activities, however, may require evolution rather than springing into form full blown. Mr. Carlson said he would give the matter more thought. I shall plan to talk to him at greater length sometime in the near future. Meanwhile, I shall also contact the various cultural center directors to determine their concepts of the roles they play in the new downtown plan.

I am now establishing the major road system at the perimeter of the downtown area. It generally follows the route that has evolved from practically every downtown study made in the past. There is general agreement among the city technical staff that this route is feasible and the next step is to meet with the staff to begin detailed planning and see if implementation of this thoroughfare plan can be put into work over the next few years. At the evening meeting of the DKA Committee, Mr. Caplinger appointed me to a committee with Don Swets, Bob Carroll and Bruce Watts to actively pursue the thoroughfare planning needed for downtown development. I shall be in touch with Mr. Caplinger and the other members of the committee soon to meet with them.

At the meeting of the DKA Planning Committee a decision was made to revise tentatively the sequence of mall remodeling due to underground utility problems and a slight lag in the work. The next major step in the improvement work will be alleyway work and the Water to Eleanor Burdick Mall improvement. The administrative ground work for the Water to Eleanor improvement will be laid this winter and Mr. Caplinger will assign a staff group to manage these projects as they are approved.



Summary Report #9  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page three

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

There was discussion about appointment of an architectural review board from the Mall Advisory Committee. I recommend that such a review board be established and that it work on the basis that it will assist to review any suggested private improvements to downtown. It should aid and advise rather than to criticize and obstruct.

Mr. Martling from Housing and Urban Development, discussed briefly slide talks he gives about architectural improvement of downtown areas. The program he specializes in sounds interesting and I recommend that we have him appear in Kalamazoo to discuss the architectural possibilities inherent in the present structures.

The Arcadia Creek relocation came in for some discussion during the evening and I suggest we do not lock ourselves into place with the location of Arcadia Creek until we have determined the best thoroughfare plan routing. The creek could be a significant architectural element in any improvement at the north end of downtown but it will have to be handled carefully so that it is used properly and to its best advantage.

In discussions about zoning ordinances, Mr. Bruce Watts suggested that we might possibly use parking districts where the payment for additional parking needed in downtown development is obtained on a pooled basis from all those who benefit from the parking.

My planning work is now at a point where physical layouts are being prepared for the various elements of downtown. I shall expect to have specific plans to review sometime within the next two to three months. During this period I shall work with the various groups to see how these might best be presented for review and comment. The major direction being given now is to keep immediate improvements within the framework of the long range concepts that are evolving from my current work. So far, all elements, including the improved mall areas, the extension of the Burdick Mall between Water and Eleanor and the concept of the improved alleyways are consistent with the long range planning under study. In the Water to Eleanor Street mall extension, it should be considered that Water Street will ultimately be stepped at Burdick and that traffic will be shifted upward to Eleanor extended through, across Burdick. Whether or not the construction of that mall will be done concurrently with closing of Water Street at Burdick will be a matter for early discussion of the thoroughfare study group appointed by Mr. Caplinger.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. Ray Dykema  
Mr. Irving Gilmore  
Mr. Roger Kool

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

October 21, 1970

**Summary Report #10**

**Project: 7013**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Date of Meeting: October 14, 1970**

This conference was to initiate detailed work on the master thoroughfare plan for Kalamazoo. To set the stage for this work Mr. Coplinger invited Mr. Garret Van Haften and Roger Kood of the Downtown Kalamazoo Association to attend, along with staff members Dan Swets and Bob Carroll of the City of Kalamazoo. Also, Mr. Bruce Watts, Director of Planning of Kalamazoo County was invited.

Jim Coplinger started by reviewing the elements he felt our group should consider and then asked if Mr. Swets, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Watts and myself would be willing to serve on a technical ad hoc committee to give positive direction and continuing attention to preparation a master thoroughfare plan for the entire community of Kalamazoo. All agreed, and our discussions from that point basically concerned considerations to be evaluated in such a study.

It was decided a report in principle accompanied with schematic graphics should be available to the City Manager by January 31, 1971. It was further agreed that the ad hoc committee should meet regularly and cooperate with the State Highway Department, the policy committee, and the technical advisory committee established through the area transportation study already in work. Considerable discussion ensued about traffic patterns including consideration of the Jackson, Michigan mall merchants' attitudes, the attitudes of private groups in Kalamazoo regarding provision of additional off-street parking facilities, the method of approaching definition of traffic scale and volume along with considerations as to all the elements that contribute to deterioration of an urban community. It was emphasized throughout this discussion that we must consider the short range downtown and total Kalamazoo community program and tie it carefully into a long range downtown and total Kalamazoo community action plan.

Another area of strong concern was the activities center, its composition and location. The committee shall also consider this particular matter. To close out this initial discussion Mr. Coplinger discussed the general condition of buildings in Kalamazoo and asked opinions of members of the group about occupancy, safety, code conformance, and enforcement. It was decided that the ad hoc thoroughfare committee certainly could evaluate the impact of building condition on thoroughfare planning and overall planning, but that it would not be a prime objective of the committee.

After this meeting, which was helpful for setting guidelines, the ad hoc committee consisting of those mentioned above, met and laid preliminary ground work for the thoroughfare planning, particularly as it relates to areas surrounding downtown and in downtown. We defined the terminology applied to various traffic levels, taking into account two factors, a scale of traffic, consisting primarily of definition of velocity and a service level maintained by the facility which dealt with a rating system utilized by traffic engineers to measure flow characteristics of traffic. Our goal will be to work on a total Kalamazoo thoroughfare plan in principle with specific attention given to an area bounded roughly by the colleges on the west, Cross Town Parkway on the south, Kalamazoo River on the east and Paterson Street on the north.

In the final phase we will deal with the in-principle plan for the downtown area geographically defined in the Kalamazoo 1960 study. This study was again reviewed and the principles underlying the need for a strong and healthy downtown reevaluated by the committee. All present felt these basic reasons and the rationale for the existence of downtown were still valid as set forth in the report. These shall furnish us with our guidelines for development work on the thoroughfare plan.

Our major job will be to set in motion the forces necessary to get an official thoroughfare plan prepared and adopted. We also will make ourselves available on call to the State Highway Department as well as local groups who may need advice in technical matters relating to thoroughfare planning. Our in-principle report on the area defined above along with rough schematics of the proposals will be submitted to the City Manager by a target date of January 31, 1971. These will in turn provide basic guidelines by which immediate action can be taken and from which detailed thoroughfare planning can proceed.

The latter part of our meeting dealt with specific details. In planning phase one we shall consider the use of Arendia Creek to enhance downtown and attempt in the thoroughfare design to incorporate an Arendia drainage basin. This basin is important and the run off grows in magnitude each year as additional impervious surfaces are placed along the basin route. We shall make every effort to incorporate Arendia Creek as an architectural and design feature of the thoroughfare program. The Portage Creek basin will also be considered.

We will take into account the need for improved access to downtown from the universities on the west and from the north side neighborhoods. Here we are considering the concept of corridors which present areas of free access to and from major pivot points. We also will consider different kinds of transportation that utilize thoroughfare routes. These include private autos, trucks, buses, rail (at grade level, overhead and underground), moving sidewalks, conveyor systems and combinations of the above.

In addition, we will consider in the near future the interrelationship of central functional facilities serving multiple downtown buildings

Summary Report #10  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page 3

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

through larger conveyor tubes. The conveyor housings might be seven to ten feet round water pipe and interconnect major groupings of downtown structures with working centers located on the outer boundaries. Deliveries, pick ups, warehousing, and functional activities such as receiving and marking could all be accomplished where there is a mutuality of interest gained. This would, of course, tend to reduce overhead costs as well as provide a method of reducing street use by delivery and shipping traffic. The concept has much merit and will come in for some study in this preliminary phase.

These items were all agreed upon in concept as a planning program by the ad hoc committee and members and they are looking forward to beginning work.

The ad hoc committee will meet on a regular two week basis with the next session being October 28, 1970, at 10:00 A.M. Attendance at the meetings, unless others are specially invited, will be limited to the four members of the group. Bob Carroll is chairman and I am acting as secretary recording a set of minutes for members of the committee and Mr. Coplinger, and reporting these activities of interest to the BIA in my regular reports to them.

This group shows promise of strong action and the move has been a good one to get our thoroughfare work underway.



Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/dv

cc: Messrs. C. Van Haften  
Ray Eykema  
L. Gilmore  
Roger Koci  
Floyd L. Greenburg

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

October 31, 1970

Summary Report #11

Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Project: 7013

Date of visit: October 28, 1970

On October 28, 1970 the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Kalamazoo County Thoroughfare Planning was held to continue their work on the Kalamazoo Thoroughfare study. I presented to the committee a concept of traffic movement whereby the structure of the thoroughfare plan would be designed to accommodate varying scales of traffic primarily ranging from 40 MPH down to 0 MPH. The major document discussed was an overlay map of downtown Kalamazoo on which was imposed scale values for the major street pattern in the central city area. These values range from speeds of 35 MPH (scale 3 traffic) on major routes around and into downtown, down to speeds of 0 - 15 MPH (scale 5) which are found on secondary streets and in parking lots and structures.

This discussion placed before the Ad Hoc Committee the concept of arranging these various scaled traffic arteries in such manner as to most effectively serve the various needs of people using downtown. The fundamental principle of the system is that traffic of a vehicular nature is not totally separated from traffic of a pedestrian nature. Instead, the point at which there must be an intermingling such as in a parking area or on a low speed artery was discussed in terms of how each would be designed for optimum safety, convenience and effectiveness. Thus, traffic would be brought to and into downtown on a thoroughfare pattern in which the streets are designed to operate on varying scales of traffic speeds. This would enable most effective use to be made of the existing street pattern without major upheavals in such pattern leading to high costs and overly long implementation periods.

The emphasis is on the transition from the present street pattern into one which effectively serves downtown by virtue of its being limited to certain scale traffic flow.

The concept was favorably received by the committee and a healthy discussion of many such of the various scale arteries should be located ensued. Members of the committee will take this concept under advisement and between now and the next meeting generate additional thoughts about its use. At the next meeting we also will review the traffic need study prepared by the city and discuss it and its relationship to our study work.

The Ad Hoc Committee was augmented today by Tim Kuehner, Interim City Planning Director, Dave Hart, Department Planner and Jim Wiehman, Assistant to Don Swets. This deeper involvement of staff members in the committee activity is healthy and it appears that some substantial progress can be made with this group so far as a practical working plan that can be put into implementation in the foreseeable future.

Between now and the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee I plan to develop the scaler concept further and to also develop some larger scale plans of that nature which might be done with the land that would be contained within major arterial systems as proposed.

While in Kalamazoo I also talked to Gordon Rogers who mentioned to me that the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in Kalamazoo is still extremely interested in working with the DKA and the city in any capacity they might for downtown development. I told Gordon we would certainly welcome their help and I will attempt to develop, in the near future, a method by which they might participate in planning activities where their aid and advice could be of assistance. It might be appropriate to consider this matter at one of the Tuesday evening meetings of the Downtown Kalamazoo planning group.

After the Ad Hoc Traffic Committee meeting, I visited briefly with Drury Greenburg and then drove to Jackson to inspect and evaluate on a preliminary basis the downtown mall there. Mr. Caplinger had mentioned two weeks ago that some of the downtown business men were not totally happy with the Jackson Mall and the traffic patterns. This trip was to determine the actual conditions in Jackson and the reasons for them and discuss about the downtown program there. I drove the outside road pattern around downtown and found it was a one way boundary route that moved traffic quite smoothly and safely. Considerable parking has been developed on the perimeter of the downtown area and many of the stores are involved or have completed remodeling of elevations facing the outside roads and parking lots. There is considerable confusion as to where you are on the road pattern and the intersection of many cross thoroughfares with the major by-pass route is confusing. However, in general, it appears that the principal structure of the road pattern taking people to the downtown district is good.

Some criticism might be leveled at the road pattern which brings people into close proximity to downtown stores. Referring to our scaler techniques, we can say that the traffic on the outside road system moves in scale 3 (35 to 50 MPH) but in addition, there is considerable cross traffic at the scale 3 level which completely traverses the north - south direction of downtown. This cross traffic is confusing and divides the downtown.

**Summary Report #11  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page three**

**RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER**

I inspected the inner areas of the mall and found them quite pleasant although the raised planting beds and high mounted green areas somewhat obstruct free circulation of pedestrian traffic on the mall. Again, the confusion as to location is considerable and a lesson is to be learned here that adequate signing of the mall itself as well as the signing of the directions to the mall and downtown are essential ingredients of successful design.

I talked to three or four people about the mall, one of whom was a sales clerk at Woolworth's. She said their business had been hurt by the mall and she, as well as her fellow salesladies, were against it. She also reported that a local jeweler in a nearby store had violently opposed the mall and considers it to be damaging to business. Next, I talked to Mr. Seigle who owns a camera shop and a Mr. Townley who owns a photographic studio. Both gentlemen were convinced that the mall had been planned very well. They both felt also that the mall was now beginning to prove itself and that, in their opinions, most downtown people were heavily in favor of what had been done. The complaints, they said, followed the usual pattern, in that those who were dissatisfied and a small minority, have been most vocal. Those who like the mall and are satisfied with it have remained quiet. Some objections stem primarily from a decline, either actual or imagined, in business.

I shall do more work in evaluating the system in Jackson since some merchants who are also in Kalamazoo are presently doing business on the Jackson Mall. Generally, my comments are that the problem in Jackson is one of thoroughfare confusion and lack of directional orientation. These are legitimate criticisms and we shall attempt to avoid this same pitfall in the redesign of our Kalamazoo downtown. I shall report further on the Jackson Mall at a later date.

**Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.**

**RJS/m**

**To: Mr. G. Van Haelten  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. Roger Kooi  
Mr. F. Greenburg**

Meeting #11  
Ad Hoc Committee on Thoroughfare Planning  
Kalamazoo County  
Page four

RALPH J. STEPHENSON, P. E.  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for either Friday, February 4, 1972, or Friday February 18, 1972, depending on availability of staff members. It is extremely important that all members of the ad hoc committee attend as many sessions as possible. Bob Carroll will check and let members of the committee know what date in February our next conference will be held.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/dv



RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

November 12, 1970

**Summary Report #12**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 7013**

**Date of visit: November 3, 1970**

On Tuesday, November 3, 1970, I attended the regular evening meeting of the DKA Downtown Planning Group. This meeting was concerned primarily with a review of the current mall construction, a discussion of the ad hoc traffic committee's activities and an in-depth discussion of the projected activity or convention center.

Current mall construction is moving more slowly than had been anticipated and it appears that completion of the north mall will be hard pressed to meet the Christmas date. It has been decided to defer construction on the other two sectors until next spring.

So far as the ad hoc traffic committee is concerned, the DKA Group was brought up to date on its work by Don Swets, Jim Caplinger and me. Reports of this committee are on file and those concerned with its activities will find detailed minutes available if they wish.

After listening to the work outline, the group decided it was a worthwhile effort and critical to a proper job of downtown planning. There also was expressed the sense that activities of the group should lead to concrete and specific street plans for the near, as well as distant future, which might be implemented as quickly as possible. Every effort is to be made toward achieving this end.

There is consideration of changing the name of the committee by removing the words ad hoc. The matter will be given consideration by Jim Caplinger.

Considerable discussion revolved around the location of an activity center on a site at the present position of the old armory on Water Street. This site, if considered as bounded by the present outline of the armory with minimal consideration of control on the surrounding land, would be an undesirable location since the site is not of sufficient size nor does it have proper

Summary Report #12  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

positioning to develop good access and egress routes. If it is considered that the entire surrounding area, including the parking lots to the west, east and north are developed on a controlled basis with adequate promise of a high grade development being built over the next few years, it would be a satisfactory site although its rank in desirability might be lower than other locations in the downtown area. Here we are faced with balancing the prospect of immediate construction and development against waiting until an ideally suited site is located, interest generated and design and construction initiated. This matter is one that has to be resolved between the private and the public interests concerned. It must be remembered that if a convention center is considered a proper investment by a private individual, then probably he will build it anywhere he can find what he considers a suitable site for such a facility. Therefore, if construction of a convention center is going to be initiated, even though the site is not in the best possible location but is available and is desirable to the developer, optimum control should be held so that the project can move ahead within the context of proper downtown planning. As such, the Water Street site meets these requirements and I urge only that adequate assurances of a binding nature be obtained prior to such a development that it will be only the forerunner of a more elaborate development in which the full concept of our convention center / activity center will be realized. This is possible since a good share of the surrounding area needed for parking and thoroughfare routes is presently controlled by the city.

Adequate steps, as in any good planned project, must be taken to insure that this development does not become merely a permanent interim project which never goes beyond the immediate goal of feeding conventioners and housing their exhibits.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. P. Greenburg  
Mr. R. Keel

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

November 21, 1970

**Summary Report #13**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 70:3**

**Date of visit: November 13, 1970**

On Friday, November 13, 1970 I participated in the regular meeting of the ad hoc committee on thoroughfare planning for Kalamazoo County. At this session we took great strides toward resolving the fundamental corridor pattern of principal thoroughfares in Kalamazoo particularly as they relate to the downtown area. Don Swets and Jim Wichman of the Department of Public Works reviewed in detail the input they have provided to the State Highway Department for its highway needs study.

The State is about to enter into a contract with a consultant to begin the detailed thoroughfare planning necessary to project long range tax and community needs. Our meeting resulted in a decision to work with the basic patterns of thoroughfares in and around downtown as proposed by Don Swets, Bob Carroll and Jim Wichman and to now begin preparation of actual schematic land use plans within the boundaries of these thoroughfares. Our next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 4th and will be a major review session at which, hopefully, each of the members will present his ideas and concepts of the land utilization principles to be followed in our detailed planning efforts.

Bob Carroll made an announcement at the ad hoc committee meeting that the Rose Street - Water Street parking deck will open on November 27, 1970 with 200 spaces being available. It will remain open until after Christmas when it will close down for resumption of construction.

After the committee meeting I had a luncheon conference with Elton Ham and C. H. Mallon at which we discussed the proposed activity center on the armory site fronting on Water Street. This conference was to provide them background information for their meeting later with Chamber of Commerce representatives. We personally inspected the armory and I passed along my observations and comments that might be helpful to Elton Ham.

Before leaving Kalamazoo I had a good discussion with Mr. Bob Goldacker at Jacobson's regarding the positioning of streets, surface parking areas and particularly, multi-level parking structures. He conveyed to me some of the interest that his firm had in downtown and further said that it is well known they are very interested in participating to the greatest extent possible with the city and other private business men to bring additional parking facilities properly located to the downtown area.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/n

To: Messrs. Van Hanfton, Rybicki, Gilmore,  
Greenburg, Keel

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

December 7, 1970

Summary Report #14

Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Project: 70:3

Date of visit: December 4, 1970

On Friday, December 4, 1970 I participated in the regular meeting of the ad hoc committee on thoroughfare planning. This session was devoted to a review of specific plans presented by myself and generalized plans presented by Bob Carroll. Progress was considerable and we are close to resolving our study recommendations for major thoroughfare routes in and around the central city area. It should be emphasized that these routes are being decided upon for presentation in the preliminary thoroughfare recommendations to be submitted to the city manager on January 31, 1971. The committee is hopeful that they will be able to finish their work although it is possible some delay will be encountered since the task of assimilating data and reporting on this matter is complex.

It appears that some concensus has been achieved on the matter of an approach to downtown planning that will fulfill the objectives of traffic separation and good vehicular flow while still allowing continued expansion of green areas and pedestrian sectors. We also are attempting to maintain a plan that will provide the greatest encouragement possible to flexible private development within major land areas. Presently, our basic plan divides the downtown into 24 area groupings of which the largest is the section between Lovell on the south, Pitcher and Edwards on the east, Eleanor on the north and Rose on the west. Within this area it appears that we will be able to develop a good inter-relationship between low scale (0 - 35 MPH) traffic and bring such traffic into progressively lower scale reservoirs while maintaining a proper separation of vehicles and pedestrians. The major effort I am making in the program at present is continued preparation of large scale plans of the various sectors under consideration.

Some discussion of the committee dealt with the technique of advising the IKA of our planning progress while still keeping the city staff planning within proper channels of communication to and from the city manager. The committee requested that the graphic work I am doing be kept internally within the committee and released to the IKA when the report to the city manager was presented. I suggest that we adhere to this procedure to insure full effectiveness of the excellent relationship now existing between the city staff and the IKA group. The work we are doing is consistent with

Summary Report #14  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

our long range plans for downtown and any premature disclosure of plans that are presently schematic and preliminary in nature might be misunderstood by those who did not have a full explanation of them when they were reviewed. I shall proceed to work with the committee on this basis unless other techniques are suggested. It is my recommendation that we observe the wishes of the committee in this matter.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. F. Greenburg  
Mr. R. Kooi

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

December 21, 1970

Summary Report #15

Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Project: 70:3

Date of visit: December 17, 1970

Actions taken:

- Attended ad hoc thoroughfare committee meeting
- Continued personal reconnaissance of downtown area
- Discussed current planning efforts with various downtown business men

The December 17th meeting of the ad hoc thoroughfare committee concentrated on resolving major primary and secondary routes. There is general agreement on the committee as to a basic plan and preparation of the in-principle report to the city manager is to be started. This thoroughfare plan represents a good point from which future long range downtown planning can proceed with a strong degree of predictability and confidence as to its implementation. The ad hoc committee feels the plan as has been evolved is acceptable, workable and practical.

There are some major elements that probably will not be realized for many years since they are a joint responsibility of the city and the State Highway Department. However, the task of establishing such long range thoroughfare goals is considered to be a proper function of this committee. There are also some projections for local street patterns that involve sizable additions to the routes and probably will be accomplished piecemeal over a period of years. The major feature of the plan now being considered is that immediate implementation steps can be taken to improve traffic flow and public safety without a major overhauling of the total street system having to be done at the same time.

Construction of the north mall is still not complete and apparently its slow movement has caused some concern among the downtown business people, particularly those located on the mall. I recommend that when we initiate the remodeling of the middle and south mall areas that a careful plan of work be produced, a schedule prepared and as close adherence as possible be made to projected end dates. Construction has an initially good effect

Summary Report #15  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

upon business since people are curious about what is going on. However, prolonged disruption of physical access routes to a business reduces the foot traffic pattern to and from the building.

The north mall appears very nice. The light fixtures particularly are good looking, and the layout and arrangement of the various elements is attractive.

My efforts over the next month and a half will be to concentrate with the ad hoc committee on preparing the report to Mr. Caplinger.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everybody a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. Although economic conditions this last year have scarcely been the best, it appears that we can look forward to an improvement in both attitudes and the economy in the coming months. If we approach the new year with the faith that this is so, I am certain that it will help a great deal in the solution to some of our current problems.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Mr. G. Van Haaften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. F. Greenburg  
Mr. R. Kooi

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

January 16, 1971

**Summary Report #16**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 70:3**

**Date of visit: January 8, 1971**

**Actions taken:**

- Attended ad hoc thoroughfare committee meeting
- Reviewed downtown planning and development organization with members of former DEPC

The January 8th meeting of the ad hoc thoroughfare committee concentrated on reviewing previous ideas and deciding upon an in-principal thoroughfare plan for presentation to the city manager sometime within the next three weeks. It is still hoped that we can meet our deadline of January 31st, although presently the limiting factor is time available to prepare the graphics and the report. As has been discussed several times, when the report is complete, it will be released first to the city manager. Further release of information will come from him. This, to insure that the proper channels are followed so far as the findings of the committee are concerned. I am generally satisfied with the work that the committee has done and feel that its major significance and impact will be felt both in the immediate future, and more importantly, as the long range program of improved streets and land use is brought into being.

To this point, there is no major conflict between what I consider appropriate planning procedure and philosophy with the suggested improvements and alterations in the thoroughfare patterns suggested by the ad hoc group. Of prime importance is that all members of the group whole heartedly agree with the findings. This should make it easier for concentrated support to be provided an implementation program.

Other subjects discussed subsequent to the ad hoc committee meeting included techniques of reorganizing the non-profit downtown development activity, progress on the proposed Convention Center and another personal reconnaissance of the Water Street/Harris Hotel area site with Elton Ham to physically evaluate traffic movement alternatives and land use possibilities for a proposed convention center development.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Messrs. Van Knaften, Dykema,  
Gilmore, Greenburg, Kool



RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

February 2, 1971  
(Dist. 1-26-71)

**Summary Report #17**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 70:3**

**Date of visit: January 22, 1971**

**Actions taken:**

- Attended ad hoc thoroughfare committee meeting
- Conferred with Garrett Van Haften, Henry Ford, Ray Dylana and Elton Ham re downtown planning and development organization

This meeting of the ad hoc committee summarized the work to date and made final assignments for writing the report to the city manager on the in-principal thoroughfare program. We probably will not complete all of our work by January 31st but should have it ready for submission soon after. It was emphasized in this meeting that the in-principal thoroughfare report will not be a quantified document. It will deal with recommendations of a well qualified group of technical staff persons presenting schematic concepts of the thoroughfare system based upon available quantified data.

Implementation of the thoroughfare program can start in limited form from the committee's recommendations since some early steps have present validity. Other features of the thoroughfare plan will require verification and additional information to be obtained from a model now being built by the state highway department of Kalamazoo's street system. This model is a mathematical problem solving device that establishes within a given traffic pattern the volumes of vehicles to be expected and that can be accommodated. Thus, although limited implementation can start early on the thoroughfare program, later steps in the implementation will be guided by ultimate work done by the state highway department in conjunction with the city and county of Kalamazoo.

The interest in the ad hoc thoroughfare committee's report is quite high. However, as recommended earlier by me, we will release the information in the report first to the city manager, per his request. Mr. Caplinger will then distribute the material from his office as he feels best.

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

Summary Report #17  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two

I am pleased with the work that has been done in this committee and feel it represents some of the best thinking of technical experts in the field of traffic and planning. The significant feature of this ad hoc committee operation has been that for one of the first times in recent years, groups with diverse interests on a highly technical problem have been able to devote time and effort with official sanction to generating a sound, feasible plan of action. I feel it will bear good fruit in the future.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/n

To: Mr. G. Van Haaften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. F. Greenburg  
Mr. R. Kooi

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

May 24, 1971

**Summary Report #20**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 7013**

**Date of visit: May 18, 1971**

**Actions taken:**

- Attended DKA downtown planning committee meeting

The main topic of discussion was the suggested thoroughfare plan prepared in concept by the ad hoc thoroughfare committee and submitted to Mr. Caplinger on April 5, 1971.

Don Swets, Bruce Watts, Tim Kuehler and I reviewed the content of the report, explaining the thoroughfare concept, the major land parcel idea and the several other thoughts expressed in the report. There was considerable discussion about various aspects of the report and in-principle acceptance of the ideas seemed good. Our major job now is to get the report in the hands of responsible parties who can give it either official or unofficial approval. It is intended presently to gain a form of approval of the thoroughfare report from the Planning Commission at their June 3rd meeting, 2:30 P.M. I shall plan to attend to assist, if needed, in presenting information.

In addition, the report is probably going to be used, now that it has been publicly issued, to guide much of the conceptual thinking about both private and public planning in the downtown area. Roger Keel said that on May 27th the Chamber of Commerce is meeting at K College and will be considering in detail some of the uses, particularly as they apply to an activity center. I shall try to attend this meeting also, so that the thoroughfare plan is completely understood if anyone wishes further explanation.

At the DKA meeting Mr. Caplinger made copies of the issued report available to anyone who wished one. I suggest that all DKA members become intimately acquainted with the thoroughfare plan proposal. It should be noted that the thoroughfare plan as proposed in concept also outlines a street system for these

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

Summary Report #20  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two

areas directly surrounding the central city. In essence, it is a very necessary arterial program for not only downtown but the area just outside of the central city. Apparently from discussions held at this DKA meeting, support has been generally good for the plan on the part of those who have seen it. The City Commission has reviewed the material and is favorably inclined toward it.

There were some additional discussions during the evening, some of the more significant revolving around proposed plans for the downtown area. Mr. Caplinger reviewed ideas for extension of the mall from Water to Eleanor Street and relations between the city parks and recreation department and the Robert O'Boyle firm were discussed in detail. Mr. Caplinger also mentioned several other projects he is interested in, including construction of additional multi-level parking facilities in the downtown area, particularly at the south end, extension of the mall to broaden out pedestrian areas, low speed, low volume vehicular access points east and west of Burdick, design and construction of arcades at present alley areas leading off from Burdick Mall, and very interestingly the concept of combining the entire public and private transportation facilities in a hub at the existing Penn Central Railroad Station. This is an idea worthy of further exploration.

Generally, the meeting was quite good and my sensing is that there is considerable enthusiasm for the thoroughfare plan, particularly since it now allows those creative people within city government and in private areas to really bring forth ideas that are possible to achieve within a flexible and friendly environment.

Again, I urge that every member of the DKA be encouraged to become well acquainted with the interim in-concept thoroughfare plan and suggest that we might have one or two major meetings of the DKA to review the concept and discuss the potential within it. If such meetings are possible, it would be wise to invite the city staff members who participated in the preparation of the report.

My activities over the next few weeks will deal primarily with a review of development possibilities within the proposed plan and programming of the work that should be done over the coming year in this area. Once either informal or formal approvals have been obtained from appropriate city agencies such as the planning commission and others, we should begin detailed discussions of

**Summary Report #20  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page three**

**RALPH J. STEPHENSON**

**CONSULTING ENGINEER**

**the program with the highway department so they can incorporate the concepts into their work on the Kalamazoo transportation study. This is an area with which I shall keep closely in touch.**

**Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.**

**RJS/w**

**To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. F. Greenburg  
Mr. R. Keel**

July 16, 1971

**Summary Report #24**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 70:3**

**Date of visit: Monday, July 12, 1971**

**Actions taken:**

- Met with representatives of the city and county planning departments and State Highway Department to discuss thoroughfare plan procedures
- Met with thoroughfare ad hoc committee and city manager

This visit was primarily to review the thoroughfare plan and State Highway Department needs with Dave Bunt of the Kalamazoo planning staff, Karl Freed of the County planning staff and Fred Sanborn, planner for the State Highway Department. The thoroughfare system plan presented by the ad hoc committee has been officially forwarded to the State Department of Highways. Our conversation today indicated no major SDH technical differences with our recommendations and Mr. Sanborn said that within limits, to the point where state trunk lines are affected, that implementation of this program could proceed without major disruption to their current study of the transportation system in Kalamazoo County. However, it is strongly suggested that any projected improvements be brought to the attention of the Highway Department so that major policy communication is kept open. Cooperation with the Highway Department, particularly at the technical level, is currently excellent and one of the goals of the thoroughfare ad hoc committee is to keep lines of communication free and unlogged.

The time table for the transportation study now is that the Highway Department will take information on land use and population activity levels from the city and county and using these, will simulate route desire lines for various configurations of road systems. It is planned to close up the land use study for the years 1980, 1990 and 2020 by late fall and begin running simulations immediately after, probably in late fall or early winter. The study has taken a great deal of time, primarily due to a need for rechecking projected population figures and restudying certain statistical elements that had to be cast in more definitive form.

Summary Report #24  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two

I was asked to assist, if possible, in preparing some schematic land use projections for the downtown area and in this work, would cooperate with Dave Hunt to provide the information required by the State Highway Department. I shall do this to the extent that I feel appropriate for expediting continuing planning work for the downtown area.

During our meeting it was stressed that all levels of government, city, county and state, should be urged to participate fully in this work since their activities are closely interrelated. It appears that this is possible provided continuous attention is given to maintaining a working relationship such as with the ad hoc committee.

Reviewing possible activities of this continuing ad hoc committee, Mr. Sanborn felt that they could very well move into more definitive planning of the thoroughfare system around the central business district without harming work the Highway Department is doing.

In the afternoon I met with the City Manager and the members of the ad hoc thoroughfare committee. All present felt that its activities should be continued into the second phase in which specific projects were identified, specific roads were selected and continuing attention to implementation was given. It is, in my opinion, essential that the county continue to be represented at the ad hoc thoroughfare committee sessions and Bruce Watts agreed that there would be a county representative at the meetings. Bob Carroll will continue to act as chairman of this group with the membership as follows:

Bob Carroll, Chairman  
Don Swets  
Jim Wickman  
Tim Kuether  
Bruce Watts  
Ralph J. Stephenson

The first assignment given the committee by Mr. Caplinger is to prepare a definitive outline of activities the committee will engage in during this second phase. Concurrently, we are to meet with the State Highway Department Director of Planning, Mr. Robert Boatman, or his superior, if possible, to review the status of work in Kalamazoo and attempt to insure close attention being given the current thoroughfare program. Bob Carroll is to arrange this meeting for later this month.

I feel that we now have a solid base upon which to move ahead on our downtown planning program and would like to consider a major discussion with key members of the IKA regarding how the major land parcel concept can be implemented, possibly through non-profit corporate activity in which land could be held by purchase, option, right of first refusal or other techniques for resale

Summary Report #24  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page three

to private or public interests interested in locating downtown. A somewhat basic principle applies here. Since the motivation in our economy for development consists of opportunity, capital and land, it seems to me that the major contributions of the local business men in downtown Kalamazoo could well be concerned with providing the exposure to opportunity and assembling the land needed. This would encourage developers, local or out-of-town, to search for and provide the money needed for development. Although this principle may appear simplistic, it states the basic elements of a successful developmental program. Land, in my opinion, is currently the major control point, since without the land, money for improvements cannot be spent. Thus, in the major land parcel concept, if a non-profit corporation could acquire and control parcels of land large enough to be of interest to developers, and located in areas of high opportunity, it could very well spark development in the downtown.

Another area of emphasis is increasing residential density in the areas directly adjoining downtown. Here we are considering locations that will allow the resident to work, shop or play in downtown without having to use the automobile to get there from his place of living. Probably these high density residential areas would best be located on the periphery of the downtown although this is not totally essential since opportunities exist for permanent or transient residential use in the heart of the CBD. The regeneration of life in downtown will depend to a large extent on complementary uses that are provided. Thus, close-in residential, the activity center, additional eating and recreation facilities all aimed at generating higher use than presently are elements we should seriously be considering now. I shall discuss this in more detail with Roger Kooi the next time I am in Kalamazoo.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/n

To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. F. Greenberg  
Mr. R. Kooi



August 5, 1971

**Summary Report #25**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 70:3**

**Dates of visits: July 28, 1971 - State Highway Dept., Lansing, Michigan  
June 30, 1971 - North Mall Opening in Kalamazoo**

**Actions taken:**

- Met with State Highway Department staff and ad hoc committee in Lansing to review proposed thoroughfare system plan
- Attended North Mall Opening and reviewed status of downtown Kalamazoo program

At the meeting with the State Highway Department the entire ad hoc committee studying thoroughfare planning in Kalamazoo was present with Earl Freed attending for Bruce Watts and Don Svets representing both himself and Jim Wickham. Dave Hunt of the Kalamazoo Planning staff also attended. We met with the top people in the Planning Group including Mr. Sam Cryderman and Robert S. Newman. First, a brief presentation was made of the history of the ad hoc committee and preparation of the thoroughfare plan after which a general discussion of the proposed plan as it relates to the State Highway system in Kalamazoo was conducted.

The plan appears to be generally acceptable to the technical and executive staffs of the Highway Department although Mr. Cryderman explained that they had not had a chance to review it in detail. Additional copies are to be made available. The State people feel that the study has given Kalamazoo a lead of from four to six months by doing early work that normally would have had to be accomplished later this year, prior to the time thoroughfare model simulations are being run. What the State Highway Department needs now is a detailed list of the priorities of development in the thoroughfare construction for Kalamazoo downtown. They suggested we concentrate in the next few weeks on stating these priorities so they can proceed with adequate input of information from the Kalamazoo City technical staff and the Kalamazoo County Planning Group from their transportation study.

There are no conventional funds available at present for any new road construction in Kalamazoo that might be participated in by the State Highway Department other than those already committed on a long time basis. Therefore,

**Summary Report #25  
Eastern Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two**

It is critical we get our planning before the Highway Department now concerning the coming five to ten year period. The transportation needs of many other communities in Michigan are also being placed before the Highway Department and Kalamazoo is in stiff competition with these communities for road funds.

Some of the early steps proposed in the thoroughfare plan such as connecting Kalamazoo with Holland and improving the capacity of Holland may have to be done on a completely local basis. Mr. Bestman and Mr. Cryer, however, mentioned there is a program called Federal Aid to the Urban System in which experimental procedures are to be followed that hopefully will eliminate much of the administrative difficulty in getting projects into the field. Kalamazoo may be eligible for several hundred thousand dollars of assistance in this program and we should make absolutely certain that the Highway Department understands our continuing interest in getting improvements immediately underway within the next two years. This matter was noted at the meeting by Bob Carroll, Don Swets and Tim Kuehler and the staff at the city level is well aware of our interest.

Since the meeting was informational in nature, it certainly accomplished its purpose and gave us a strong rapport with the Highway Department. Part of my problem is communication and since there is enormous competition for highway department attention and federal funding, it will be absolutely necessary for Kalamazoo and particularly the private business sector, to insure maintenance of this continuity to gain those things of importance to them and the central city thoroughfare system.

A summary question was asked of the Highway Department staff which posed the question - If the thoroughfare plan as suggested in the ad hoc committee's report were put into work with local funding at this particular time and carried through to its completion, would it be acceptable to the State Highway Department? The answer was a qualified yes with the only stipulation being that any of those areas that affect state trunklines should be reviewed in light of the study now being made of the transportation system in Kalamazoo by the Highway Department. However, it was further pointed out by the Highway Department staff that they do need the kind of direction the thoroughfare study gives them and that generally, if financing could be worked out, that the study would be considered generally acceptable. What this means essentially is that our reworking of state trunklines as shown in the plan could well be accepted without major disagreement by the Highway Department if their ultimate study shows the desired pattern to be where we have assumed it to be based on preliminary findings of the Highway Department and the county consultants.

Overall, it was a good meeting and one which was essential. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of a good thoroughfare network to the continuing health of Kalamazoo particularly as it relates to the major land parcel concept. In

**Summary Report #45**  
**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning**  
**Kalamazoo, Michigan**  
**Page three**

my summary report #43 I mentioned and discussed in some detail the importance of providing lead and opportunity to potential investors in downtown properties. Only by maintaining a close control of the traffic pattern to be imposed upon the community can local and non local investors be assured that the real estate opportunities inherent in such a pattern as we have proposed will be realized.

At the opening of the North Mall in Kalamazoo on Friday, July 30th, I had an opportunity to talk to several people in the downtown area of Kalamazoo. I basically reviewed with some of them, including Mr. Coplinger, Floyd Greenberg and Roger Ebel, the meeting we had at the Highway Department. With others I discussed the importance of continuing attention to the planning effort and explained that strong continuity of management, particularly in the HKA by those directly concerned on a day to day basis with downtown problems and improvement must be maintained through this rather critical period when the climate is particularly favorable to downtown improvement. I do believe that during the coming months there will be a period when the city staff, by virtue of its day to day responsibilities, will maintain the continuity needed. However, at some point in the future, it will again be necessary to guide and re-establish, if necessary, the technical planning actions needed for effective action.

In the interim I shall make every effort to establish a continuing program that will carry on through the winter. In summary report #44 dated July 16, 1971 I stressed that I have been asked to assist in preparing a definitive outline of activities the ad hoc committee will engage in during its second phase of work. This is an assignment given the ad hoc committee by the city manager and was felt by all concerned that it would give us a solid base on which to move ahead on our downtown planning program. In the time that remains under my present retainer with the HKA, I shall, unless I hear to the contrary, accomplish this with the committee so that by early fall there will be some base upon which the major land parcel concept can be implemented. We have established a significant step with the thoroughfare report and it is important that its impact not be weakened.

One other major area of importance in the next few weeks will be to lay the ground work for establishing location of major traffic generators such as new parking, an activity center and other facilities that generate high density vehicular traffic. These also are important to the Highway Department in their road work and will be needed late this fall when they begin their runs.

My work on this place under my present retainer in Kalamazoo will come to a close the latter part of September. However, so that no continuity is lost I shall make it my business to stay in frequent touch with the chairman of the ad hoc committee, Mr. Robert Garrall, and the City Manager, where appropriate. This should also help assure some continuity of contact with the State Highway Department.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/n

To: Messrs. Van Ruffen, Dylson, Gilmore,  
Greenberg, Ebel

October 26, 1971

**Summary Report #26**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 7013**

**Date of visit: October 21, 1971**

**Actions taken:**

- Attended DKA evening meeting

**General Summary**

The meeting revolved around two major points. First, immediate considerations necessary to implement essential programs of work for the area north of Michigan, south of Kalamazoo and between Rose and Pitcher. Included here were detailed reviews of the Eleanor Street extension and the activity center. So far as the Eleanor Street extension is concerned, there are several routes it might follow, none of which is critical to determine at this point. It is necessary, however, to make detail plans for extending Eleanor Street at Burdick into the parking lot to the east. The ad hoc committee was assigned the task at their next meeting of evaluating possible routes of Eleanor Street to the east of Burdick and attempting to assign rated desirabilities to the various routes. Meanwhile, a careful but rapid evaluation should be made of the ownership of alley properties in back of buildings fronting on Burdick between Water and Eleanor. This, to permit assimilation of contiguous property for parking to the east of Burdick and north of Water Street.

Tentatively the ad hoc committee is scheduled to meet on Friday, November 12th, which is the date set for opening of the remodeled mall. At this meeting we should reactivate and plan the activities critical both to immediate action in the downtown area, and long range actions necessary to implement the schematic thoroughfare plan presented earlier this year.

The second major matter discussed at the meeting was land use patterns in the central city as they relate to the activity center. There is renewed public and private interest in the activity center

and I recommend that in the immediate future we continue an aggressive policy of land control for properties considered critical to the center, while also doing some crash program area and space allocation studies for potential uses in an activity center encompassing ten to fifteen acres of land.

Within the major land use concept proposed in our schematic therefore plan prepared by the ad hoc committee, there are several downtown land assemblies possible. Mr. Caplinger will consider assignment of specific land planning and programming activities to his staff departments, presuming the time is available so that we are able to present developmental concepts and proposals from a position of strength so far as land control and good future use plans are concerned. I recommend we be very certain of our ground when we make such proposals so that we continually build on a controlled situation that is, we should always be able to offer outside interests, who wish to contribute time, money, prestige or effort in downtown development, specific participation by local interests. It is, in my opinion, not probable that an outside profit-oriented organization will move into an unproved program in which their equity is invested unless there is equal or greater investment in both time and money, by local interests. Thus, our true search outside Kalamazoo is not only for money, but for the prestige of well known names, the know-how of experienced personnel and the over and above help that can be obtained in the matter of land control, financing and space rental through affiliation with knowledgeable organizations. They, in turn, will probably demand that all local efforts be bent toward making the enterprise profitable. If we keep these fundamentals in mind as long as we are working with profit oriented firms, we shall always be able to clearly identify our own role.

The matter of real estate control was discussed briefly, and as a general principle, I suggest that control be based upon establishing a firm position that will allow our efforts to increase the value of land. Thus, we can offer to the present owner of the land a share in the profits obtained by our efforts to increase the value. Also, to be kept in mind is the potential importance of obtaining air rights over present viable businesses. It is possible that if the structure so allows we could, in congested areas where active and profitable enterprise exist, build around such enterprise. This, provided the rights to build around have been obtained early. In this case there is no out-of-service problem with the owner, and he encourages us first while we gain first right to the air over his facility.

Summary Report #36  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page three

All of those with whom we are attempting real estate negotiations have property that either they want to sell, might want to sell or do not want to sell. This property carries a price that is of concern to the owner. If we approach them on an honest basis saying we merely want to insure that they are given an adequate dollar amount for their property, then with trust and concern we should be able to negotiate. I sincerely believe that most of the people with whom we would deal in the area under consideration will be conscientious and honest about their negotiations. True, values may initially be slightly inflated but with major land assembly we must look at aggregate costs in any given block to see what the total value is since our ultimate projected improvements deal with larger blocks of property than presently exist.

In summary, a straightforward approach by those not skilled or professionally trained in real estate provides good potential for eventual success.

As a result of tonight's meeting, the thoroughfare plan ad hoc committee will resume meetings soon to further implement the major land use parcel concept. Specific planning of areas to locate a possible activity center will be initiated upon the request of the city manager. I will also attempt to meet to the best of my efforts with concerned individuals to see if we can keep the momentum now apparent in the DKA's efforts at the present high level.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Mr. G. Van Haarlem  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Ollmaro  
Mr. F. Greenberg  
Mr. R. Keel

December 2, 1971

**Summary Report #27**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 70:3**

**Date of Visit: November 12, 1971**

**Actions taken:**

- Participated in ad hoc thoroughfare committee meeting

**General Summary**

This meeting was called to resume activities of the ad hoc thoroughfare committee and to reinstitute contacts with the State Highway Department regarding the current transportation study for the city of Kalamazoo. Matters discussed involved railroad consolidation, time scheduling on the transportation study and parking at the south end of the central business district. There are some rather interesting possibilities insofar as right-of-way abandonment by the railroads is concerned and various city departments will study the matter to see if there is benefit to the city in working with the railroads on this matter.

So far as the transportation study is concerned, Mr. Fred Sanborn of the State Highway Department was contacted by phone during our committee meeting to bring us up to date on progress. The street system model is in work and should be available for use by January 1972. At this time it can be used to simulate various thoroughfare arrangements to determine the best system for future planning. Mr. Sanborn urged the thoroughfare committee to continue working on the various elements of the system so that optimum results can be realized from the use of the transportation model.

The ad hoc committee also discussed general parking problems in the south end of the CBD and decided to prepare some rough conceptual plans of what could be done on the properties available. The committee will meet next on January 7, 1972 in Don Svets' office.

**Summary Report #27  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Page two**

**RALPH J. STEPHENSON, P.E.  
CONSULTING ENGINEER**

After the ad hoc committee meeting, I talked with various parties involved in the downtown planning program and determined the general status of the activity center work. Apparently, this project is moving along. Elton Ham was in town at the same time as I was but we were not able to get together.

I want to urge again that we continue to think of the ultimate concept of the activity center as extending beyond the one or two blocks now being considered. Also, we should keep in mind that the activity center includes not only public and quasi public buildings but must make liberal provisions for individual developers-for-profit to participate. I am certain our interested parties to this project will want to consider that a liberal sprinkling of businesses will be allowed in the center.

**Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.**

**RJS  
#**

**To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. Roger Keel  
Mr. F. Greenburg**



January 17, 1972

**Summary Report #28**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 7013**

**Date of visit: January 7, 1972**

**Actions taken:**

- Participated in ad hoc thoroughfare committee meeting

**General Summary**

This meeting was to discuss specific railroad right-of-way proposals and to initiate schematic studies of additional parking lots and structures in the southeast quadrant of downtown.

The committee will continue an intensive evaluation of penetrator routes for U.S. 131 and major north-south thoroughfares based upon the railroad right-of-way studies made. This is a significant analysis since one of the major problems of the downtown areas, as well as other sectors of the Kalamazoo region, is lack of adequate north-south routes to carry east and west secondary traffic to and from the central business district. The ad hoc committee will meet again in February to further consider this matter.

We reviewed the parking situation in the southeast quadrant of downtown and it was decided, based upon sketch studies prepared by me, to further analyze combining surface and structure parking in the blocks extending south from Gilmer's deck to Walnut Street. A major element of this complete study will be parking on the present city owned land between Levell and Walnut. There apparently is an increasing major need for parking facilities in this area and we will give a high priority to action on the need.

I have also been keeping in close touch with the various parties involved in the activity center. This program, which consists basically of transient lodgings and retail facilities along with the usual complementary activity areas, is moving

**Summary Report #28  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page two**

**RALPH J. STEPHENSON, P.E.  
CONSULTING ENGINEER**

well, and key decisions should be reached in the very near future. I shall, as a part of my continuing work, keep in close touch with the groups planning these developments.

From feedback I have received from several sources, the work of the ad hoc thoroughfare committee has been extremely significant. I should like to again urge that every member of the Downtown Kalamazoo Association obtain and study a copy of the master thoroughfare plan prepared by the ad hoc committee and issued in March, 1971. It is significant that the plan represents a milestone both in terms of organizational action and in physical planning. Its contribution to a well structured road pattern in and near downtown areas could be very high. Therefore, I recommend that all persons concerned with good downtown planning for Kalamazoo become acquainted with the recommendations of the study.

In closing, I would like to suggest that at some time in the next two to three months we consider a general information meeting for members of the DKA who wish to be brought up to date on current downtown short and medium range physical plans. At this meeting I would be glad to present the current status of the downtown program and I am certain that members of the planning commission, primarily Roger Keel, along with city staff members and Jim Caplinger, would be pleased to participate. Would these concerned members of the DKA please give me their reactions to this so if appropriate we can begin planning for such a meeting.

**Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.**

**RJS/m**

**To: Mr. G. Van Haften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. R. Keel  
Mr. F. Greenburg**

February 29, 1972

**Summary Report #29**

**Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**

**Project: 7013**

**Date of visit: February 18, 1972**

**Actions taken:**

- Participated in ad hoc thoroughfare committee meeting
- Reviewed progress of downtown activity center with Eiten Ham, Ned Benson and Roger Keel

**General Summary**

The ad hoc committee continued its consideration of railroad consolidation and the impact of such consolidation on the Kalamazoo thoroughfare plan. A visitor, Mr. Dick Borses, Regional Industrial Engineer for Penn Central, presented a full discussion of the track consolidation problem. The ad hoc group all agree this subject is of critical importance to the entire Kalamazoo community, as well as downtown specifically. For instance, railroad consolidation will have a serious impact upon the Eleanor Street extension since the intersection of Eleanor Street extended, with Kalamazoo Avenue, occurs at a critical rail crossing point.

The matter of parking in the south section of downtown is still under consideration and it appears that there is some softening of attitudes insofar as disposal of land by owners in key areas. Our present studies indicate that if we can bring decked parking directly to the rear of stores fronting on the Kalamazoo Mall and consolidate by connecting parking facilities at upper levels extending from the Gilmore Deck south to the city owned properties, we could provide a very tightly knit functionally workable parking scheme that would give many additional spaces needed in this southern section of downtown.

Summary Report #29  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page two

Bob Carroll is to review this matter for our next meeting.

In the afternoon I had the good fortune of meeting with Red Benson, Elton Ham and Reger Keel. We came together at a rather critical time in the development of the activity center and at a time that saw most of the land problems resolved. It appeared that there is an excellent chance now that some significant work can proceed in the very near future. I am delighted with progress and will keep in close touch with the various parties to see if there is anything I can assist them with in terms of guidance or advice.

Many of the matters that we have been working on quietly but quite strongly to bring about are slowly being realized. I feel that the activities of the three gentlemen mentioned above, Reger, Elton and Red, have been instrumental in moving the program ahead. There have been many others, of course, and all are to be commended for their vitality and interest. It is this kind of action on the part of a private entrepreneur that can assure success despite political setbacks. It is this kind of participation I would like to see continued on the part of the DKA. As we all know, dependence upon the political winds of fate is often risky business. I am convinced if we are to pull the entire downtown picture together we must couple the political decision-making process with an effective private set of actions.

The next meeting of the ad hoc committee will be Friday, March 24th.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/m

To: Mr. G. Van Haaften  
Mr. H. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. R. Keel  
Mr. F. Greenburg

April 5, 1972

Summary Report #30

Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Project: 7013

Date of visit: March 24, 1972

Attorney Jackson:

- Attended ad hoc thoroughfare committee meeting

This meeting was devoted to preparation of recommendations for input to the highway needs study which should be available within one month from the State Highway Department. The ad hoc committee identified several specific plans that could be used as input to this model and also came up with a unanimous recommendation that the committee be continued as a technical agency assisting in evaluation of various thoroughfare plans.

I informed the committee that my active participation in their very fine activities would not be possible any longer since my consultation with the DKA has expired. However, I did mention that I would like being kept on the mailing list and would, wherever possible, contribute either by correspondence or when the occasion permitted, by attendance at their meetings.

To the DKA and associated groups with which I have worked over those past several years, I want to express great satisfaction with the progress that has been made. In reviewing the history, it seems as no great surprise that it is one of the most significant periods of advancement since the Burdick Hall was carved out of a highly used automobile thoroughfare and turned into one of the finest and most spectacular pedestrian streets in the world. I am only disturbed slightly by the fact that to some it may appear that Kalamazoo's downtown has not advanced as rapidly as it may have seemed desirable. Progress comes slowly and in today's super-oriental age, is subjected to many expert and non expert evaluations before being accepted.

**Summary Report #30  
Downtown Kalamazoo Planning  
Page Two**

**RALPH J. STEPHENSON, P. E.  
CONSULTING ENGINEER**

To me the only exasperation of planning comes about by its apparent slowness. Therefore, we must step back and measure progress in terms of what today is accepted as commonplace compared to what yesterday was considered spectacular and dreamlike.

We have completely remodeled three major blocks of the mall, we have gained general acceptance for an extension of the mall to the north. It is presumed that Eleanor Street now will form a one way pair with Kalamazoo Avenue. Consolidation of railroad trackage in the entire city of Kalamazoo is no longer a laughable discussion subject but a strong reality. A major downtown re-development has been initiated and carried through by close cooperation of some excellent local agencies amateur in their real estate negotiations but highly professional in their enthusiasm and drive, and above all, private enterprise has again become aware of the desirability of downtown Kalamazoo as a thriving business center.

Progress,....Certainly we have progressed! These things can and do contribute to an enhancement of the total community.

I am proud to have been associated with whatever efforts toward achievements of these facts has occurred. I hope that I can, at some point in the future, continue working as the good and professional devil's advocate to keep Kalamazoo's downtown moving in a manner which we all feel is fit and proper.

I want to close by congratulating all the people I worked with for their drive and enthusiasm. Roger Keel who has done so much by his positive, creative and helpful direction, particularly in the evening meetings of the DKA, deserves a very heavy and warm round of applause. Many others, all of whom have been where the action is when they were needed, have helped. So we can truly say that it has been a community of interests acting in good faith and as usual, with straightforward honesty. These kinds of people I always find it a pleasure to work with.

**Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.**

**RJS  
E**

**To: Mr. G. Van Haaften  
Mr. R. Dykema  
Mr. I. Gilmore  
Mr. R. Keel  
Mr. F. Greenburg**

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

April 23, 1970

Note Report A

(These note reports, designated "NR" are for the purpose of setting down ideas and thoughts on the Kalamazoo 1970 Program that may or may not be used in the regular reports. They are to act as guidelines for planning the program over the next year. The NR Report will generally be in uncorrected form and not be distributed to a regular group. Generally no distribution will be made.)

Date: April 21, 1970

Kalamazoo, Michigan

I attended a meeting of the DKA Board of Directors on Tuesday, afternoon at 3:30, in the Jud Knapper Conference Room and made a brief presentation of my thoughts and ideas on downtown planning. Present were:

Dick Klein  
Jud Knapper  
Howard Van Dis  
Ralph Charle  
Russ Powell  
Roger Kooi  
Howard Peterson  
Bill Templeton  
Bob Talbot  
Don Snow  
Ray Dykema  
Rene Greenburg  
Caráy  
Jack Murray  
Glen Smith

Note: The above may not be the accurate spellings or accurate designations of all those attending.

The meeting concerned itself with regular DKA base business and then directed its attention to special reports by several of its members including Roger Kooi. Roger then introduced me and I discussed the concepts that I have for

Note Report A  
April 21, 1970  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Page two

downtown Kalamazoo and the directions in which I feel our planning efforts over the next few months should be directed.

There were some points brought out in the previous discussion that indicated some characteristics of the DKA.

1. They are concerned as good merchants with activities that will be of immediate value to their sales efforts.
2. Some concern is realized if not expressed heavily, that particularly bad weather is a deterrent to shopping downtown.
3. It is becoming difficult to attracting people by single promotional events.
4. That a dramatic improvement in the mall is necessary to reestablish its attractiveness and drawing ability.
5. They are working against continuous tight budget and one which tends to force operations that would normally be subsidized into a make-money pattern, i.e., the DKA bus operation and the tram.

During my discussion, after introduction by Roger Kooi, I talked about the following elements:

1. Immediate improvements to the Burdick Mall should include not only repaving and relandscaping, but serious consideration and implantation of a plan for roofing or enclosing either totally or in part. Howard Van Dis questioned whether I meant enclosing or roofing. It is an interesting point,



Note Report A  
April 21, 1970  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

Page three

and I think that I mean enclosing only to the extent that we can still have some open weather areas for people who enjoy the open weather environment can spend some of their walking time. Basically, the definition of the mall enclosure be such that it provides all weather shopping for those who desire it. Key points to be considered in enclosing the mall are the structural considerations of the enclosure, tying into the existing store fronts, the nature of the shell overhead; should it be transparent, translucent, or opaque, the height of the shell, access of the mall to emergency vehicles, fire protection and the possibility of utilizing upper areas of the enclosure for additional retail spaces. This program is one that should be considered an immediate program goal.

2. Separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic is still prime importance in continued planning of the downtown. We should continue to stimulate efforts to improve the pedestrian circulation pattern so that safe uninterrupted and pleasant foot travel is possible over a great section of downtown. It was pointed out after the meeting that we should definitely explain, sometime in the near future, why there are certain size limits on the downtown area. Why in the original 1980 plan these distance limits established within the yardsticks they were.

Note Report A  
April 21, 1970  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Page four

3. I believe we should examine the creation of super blocks in the downtown area. Kalamazoo contains very large blocks within its thoroughfare plan. These are susceptible to development of large complexes within the blocks that can be interrelated with each other at their perimeters. The Rochester, New York Mid-Town Plaza offers a good example of what can be done with these super blocks. Also, the original Appleton plan is a good illustration of how the super block can be developed. Examples of super blocks that could be integrated are the Gilmore Store block and Y.M.C.A block. These two blocks are super blocks within themselves that could be interfaced at the Burdick Mall. The Burdick Hotel block is another super block and if Water Street were closed, north of the Burdick it could be combined with its block immediately to the north, to offer a substantial piece of developable real estate.
4. It was pointed out to the members of the DKA that they must step outside their downtown occasionally and take a look at it objectively to see what inherent possibilities exist. An example of this was pointed up in the small arcade leading from the Burdick Mall to the Y.W.C.A. This arcade offers unique possibilities, not only being enclosed, but also the development of small shops at high rentals along a traffic that could become quite heavily traveled. We should be on the lookout for such possibilities, or as Ray Dykema puts it,

Note Report A  
April 21, 1970  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Page five

"diamonds in the rough in the downtown".

5. The thoroughfare plan is of critical importance to any development work that is to be done. We continually get involved in a deferment of the thoroughfare plan to make further traffic studies. These studies in turn takes so long to obtain results that the need for additional studies exists before the prior studies are analyzed. An effort of the DKA could be to give direction to a thoroughfare plan and insist on it being prepared and put into work.
6. Improvement of marginal properties should occupy a high priority position with DKA interest. We had considerable discussion, mostly monologued by me, of the importance of creating new and important markets adjoining the downtown and directly in the downtown. If for instance, active efforts are made by all who lease the new bank building, if constructed, it results in a beneficial improvement in the number of people available to buy in the store and do business in the shops. For instance, we assume that the average population density in an office building is one person per every 250 square feet. Then, in a 100,000 square foot building we have created 400 new potential customers. The matter of rebuilding the immediate market is extremely important to downtown businessmen. It can be done by encouraging high density office construction, high residential construction, and the activity center, as well as

Page six

development of new transient lodging facilities. These are important to the businessmen as how he fixes his store front or arranges his merchandise. Along with the thoroughfare plan which allows outlying customers to get downtown, the encouragement for a resident population for all or part of the day is also an important step to be encouraged. The amount of marginal property in the downtown area is considerable, and I would suspect that it may be as much as 10% to 20% of the total downtown properties. The DKA may even want to consider restructuring itself to have a better command of the current situation so that potential investors can learn more immediately about what development opportunities exist. The DKRC which for years have acquired properties that came on the market for resale to the City of later development, enjoyed a large amount of success and a similar kind of program might even be considered for future acquisition that may be desirable to acquire and hold.

7. Along with the previous item, it is time to recognize that the use of private funds must play a larger role than it has over the last few years in improving and updating the downtown. There is no reason to believe that now is not the time to get our statistic guns and salesmanship in order so that when money does become more available and it is bound to sometime, this year, next year, or the year after that, the opportunities for developing our best in the downtown area and anywhere else in the community or the entire southwestern market. We should

Note Report A  
April 21, 1970  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

Page seven

expand the knowledgeability of the DKA about private methods of financing, and concentrate on these techniques as opposed to the use of public funds. This does not mean that we have to neglect the use of public funds if they are legitimately available. Present studies are being made of the use of assessments and this set of guidelines, if appropriate, should be used carefully to assist in future development.

8. The DKA should concern itself very directly with the absentee owner. The absentee owner often times is the road block to full development of a program of action. The reason may be poor communication, lack of interest, difficulty of assembling votes on properties, the discretion or lack of it by the trust officer, or many other reasons that are too numerous to mention in detail. The DKA should be able to motivate its absentee downtown occupants to take a more active participative role in encouraging development downtown. How this is to be done should be studied in the next few months with an eye in mind of keeping the absentee owner informed about development potential in downtown Kalamazoo.
9. The corridors between downtown and adjoining neighborhoods, especially to the north and to the east should be a subject for early consideration. These corridors presently exist in conventional patterns and any major retail or commercial center that has developed to serve those areas will drain off trade

Note Report A  
April 21, 1970  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Page eight

from the downtown. If the corridor could be rehabilitated and redeveloped imaginatively, and so that it became a natural and interesting pathway into and from downtown, much could be done to encourage traffic into the downtown area as well as circulation through the corridor areas. Thus, the corridors themselves become the improvers of the market potential.

10. Although parking is of great importance, enough study, restudy, and re-restudy of parking situations has been made so that perhaps it is time to stop studying the matter for a few years and to immediately start developing an improved pattern of parking facilities. The present direction and land available have been used for parking is better than average. Therefore, if we can now consolidate some of the large areas through which major thoroughfares run, perhaps this will be enough to stimulate better usage of the facilities. A suggestion of Russ Powell's for instance, would be to close Water Street through from Burdick to Edwards. This would permit expansion a lot across the present Water Street right of way unbroken to Eleanor and then allow Eleanor swing down the Edwards right of way and connect into Water Street and then on out to Kalamazoo Avenue. The area to the north of Eleanor and Edwards would then be used for all A parking. In the area between Eleanor, Edwards, and Burdick Mall and Michigan would be used for in and out validated parking. I believe we have enough information at hand so that we can go ahead aggressively on a parking program now that will

Page nine

certainly not injure any long range planning we might do and as long as we don't go overboard on multi-story parking facilities, will allow flexibility for land use for future development.

11. The public relations aspect of promoting downtown is one the DKA has been so close to for so many years that traditional efforts sometimes become jaded. There are many other aspects of downtown that can be promoted besides providing any kind of sales days or special affairs that deals only with retail operations. Since the downtown area is the heart of the City and contains recreational, cultural, governmental and other kinds of facilities, an effort should be started to finding ways of promoting the downtown relative to these other things as well as to the good retail district it has. Tying a shopping program or a lucheon and shopping tour program with the museum trip is on of the ideas. Library days or other such events could very well provide some fresh and stimulating thinking that would allow a new source of promotional thoughts to be put forth. Also, if a downtown program of action is put into work, it in itself can become an extremely powerful promotional force, and heavy public relation efforts can be concentrated on the improvement of the physical environment.
12. The activity center is one of the key projects for the coming years. The studies that have been made are now of such interest and importance that they should be made public, or if not public,

Page ten

something should be done with them. I believe that with Elton Ham and C. H. Mullen along with some of the other individuals who have participated in this work should now be pulled together and a concerted effort made to do something specific. There are strong interests in developing trades and exchanges for properties that could very well be used for the civic center or activities center location and for other key areas in the City. It will take some very tactful and knowledgeable business attention to bring off these matters, but I am certain the environment is right now to start them. As mentioned under another point above, although money is currently very expensive and construction is at a low point, this is not going to be the case for an indefinite period of time. Now is the time to prepare for the influx of new ideas and new improvements. We must be ready to attract investment when money is available.

13. The trends in doing business have to be examined in light of history rather than unique experiences that are to all intense and purposes permanent. For instance, now we are finding that the trend has to be toward controllable and better secured environments where the people who operate within them can be assured of safety. Thus, we are tending toward less secluded space, less large open space, and more environmental planning that permits safety of individuals and of groups. Also, we have to be conscious of the mistreatment some make



Note Report A  
April 21, 1970  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Page eleven

of open environments available to the public. However, in planning for these now we also must realize the trend undoubtedly will reverse itself where we can again walk in safety on relatively unguarded streets, and browse in comfort even though the area is unpoliced. Therefore, our present plans should aim at being security minded, but flexible enough so that when the change begins to occur and it is desirable to once again to have a trustful environment available, the shift can be made. This is a very complexed point, and perhaps is not a critical factor in the planning of our new downtown Kalamazoo. Nevertheless, it is a point worthy of attention.

14. The discussion of the elements above was interesting to the downtown group. Those particularly concerned were, and should continue to be, the younger businessmen. If these young folks can be encouraged to get excited about the potential in downtown and encouraged to always look at the overall program within which each element can be properly and correctly encouraged to grow, we can then develop a meaningful direction to long range and short range planning. If these younger people do not comprehend what the total projection picture has to be and how each element fits then we will continue on a hand to mouth basis feeding almost the basic hunger drives and leaving the very important self actualization drives to wither. This, I feel, is a bad mistake intellectually and

RALPH J. STEPHENSON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

Note Report A  
April 21, 1970  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Page twelve

this thought is shared by many of the older member of the DKA. Therefore, over the next few months we should strive to give some of the other members a creative planning education in terms of the objective and goals that should be held out for achievement.

Ralph J. Stephenson, P.E.

RJS/dv

Note Report A  
April 22, 1970

15. In the evening I attended a meeting of the DKA Planning Committee at which the following people, among others were present:

Fran Hamilton (Mayor)  
Bob O'Boyle  
Ray Dykema  
Irving Gilmore  
Jud Knapper  
Rene Greenberg  
Jim Caplinger (City Manager)  
Roger Kooi  
Nick Kik  
Don Swets  
Tom Strickey (Water Division)

Comments applied to this meeting.

16. Jim Caplinger made a formal announcement that Gerry Jamriska, City Planner had resigned at his request that afternoon. The cause was an apparent conflict of interest in planning FUD for a private developer. Nothing more was said.
17. Mr. Caplinger reviewed the presentation he was going to make in the evening and it was stressed that the mall is the heart of the area, a viable commercial district in which should be developed first long range plans, second now activities that will achieve the long range plans. He feels the now activities should strive to make the mall look different. This appeared to be a somewhat better stance toward long range planning than spoken of earlier by Mr. Caplinger in his previous meeting. This is, of course, to our advantage, and to the City's advantage when the need for this long range structure is recognized within a short term program can be

Note Report A  
April 22, 1970

Page fourteen

implemented. Mr. Caplinger said that they would discuss three areas: street lighting, paving and services.

18. Tom Strickey then reviewed the street lighting program talking about light levels, costs and how light fixtures could be placed in the mall to improve lighting levels. We never got to a discussion of what it is that would be desirable to achieve in the malls, a higher intensity of lighting, a better pattern of lighting, or a more attractive placement of the fixtures and lighting levels. Bob O'Boyle participated in this discussion briefly, although both Bob and I preferred to wait until completion of the presentations until we made our comments. It appears that the present lighting level in the courts and malls at Kalamazoo are areas of about two foot candles. It is desirable to raise this to somewhere between three and five, although as was pointed out, as the intensity of lighting grows with the street fixture, show window lighting becomes a more important part of the total mall impression. This matter should be studied carefully, and we did successfully resist plunging into an indiscriminate program of lighting without considering in respect to the total mall plan. Mr. Caplinger said that the City would bear the extra operating expenses caused by the increase in light level, but that the downtown people would have to pay for the cost of fixtures by an assessment program.

Page fifteen

They estimated the cost to be \$40,000. to \$60,000. for fixtures. This seems low, but will be checked into in more detail later.

19. Repaving of the mall was discussed by Don Swets and Nick Kik. They estimate that the paving cost will range from \$1.50 to \$1.80 per square foot, and anticipate removing all paving and replacing with various kinds of surfaces. Total cost on paving, which would be chargeable to an assessment program, would be \$80,000. to \$100,000. The paving program came in for a great amount of discussion and was generally decided that although the landscaping and paving plan as submitted by the City had merit. That it adhered so closely to the present plan of the mall that little impact in terms of a new appearance would be gained. Therefore, it was decided that over the new three weeks, Bob O'Boyle, Don Swets, and Nick Kik along with myself, where appropriate, would come up with some alternate plans that would develop better circulation patterns insofar as retail exposure is concerned and generate a new appearance to the mall and taking into account planning, paving, and lighting. Paving and rehabilitating would probably start at the Water Street end and move south. Hopefully, it can be put into the field by June and be completed by September. This appears to be a realistic schedule. Here again, the City Staff attempted to explain very rapidly what they had done and encouraged rapidity of action as the keynote rather than an improved

Page sixteen

quality of total environmental feeling on the Burdick Mall. We expressed our concern about this matter and it was agreed by Mr. Caplinger and the others that several alternates, perhaps as many as two or three to the plan presented, be made available within a matter of three weeks or so for selection by the group. I reviewed quickly the basic concepts that brought about the development of the Mall, including the double exposure to two sides of the street as opposed to a one side exposure caused when Burdick Street separated the store fronts as a major road. The key word is retail strolling circulation and Bob O'Boyle apparently recognizes this important functional aspect of replanning the mall. So far as Bob's fees are concerned, the DKA is trying to find some interim moneys by which he can be paid for his efforts. There was almost unanimous agreement by the DKA people that the work Bob O'Boyle has done previously should not be discarded. I asked the manager about the communication between his staff, himself, and Bob during the interim periods since the manager had agreed fully to work with Bob over this intervening three weeks. The manager said that there had been little time to communicate since it was important to get a plan ready for this meeting. Recognizing this, we now have again asked that Bob be involved and this next three weeks will see his participation.

20. Mr. Caplinger stated that with the program of work underway, parking lot lighting due to a reduced capital improvements program this year will have to stay at about the same level

Note Report A  
April 22, 1970

Page seventeen

as it is right now. However, by fall if things have gone well financially, it may be possible to reexamine these lighting levels. Generally the anticipated program of paving and relandscaping can be covered from conventional bonding techniques and assessment methods.

21. The afternoon session was reviewed for this group and highest priority was set on enclosing or roofing the Burdick Mall. This study is my responsibility and I should go to work on this immediately. Also, of high priority is the major thoroughfare plan and a study of the corridors linking the Patterson neighborhood, the campus neighborhood and the central business district.
22. High enthusiasm was generated as a result of the entire meeting, and I am personally pleased at the response to the request by the DKA, from the City Manager and the staff. They demonstrated a good understanding of the desires of the DKA and are exhibiting a refreshing and healthy desire to provide positive assistance to completely replan and renovate the downtown look.
23. On April 22, 1970, I started a brief motor reconnaissance of the corridor areas into the Patterson neighborhood. Starting on Park Street and going north from Water Street, the Valley Motel is at the lower end of this route. Proceeding north we pass a motor orientated area where Jim Gilmore's dealership and a Goodyear Auto Center is located. At Kalamazoo Avenue and Park is the Kalamazoo Health Department, on the northwest

Note Report A  
April 22, 1970

Page eighteen

corner and a very large and old Sanowax building on the north-east corner. We then come to the railroad tracks, still in operation on a limited basis, and crossing these there is a series of industrial buildings from the railroad tracks north past Ransom Avenue, Butler Court and to North Street. At this point the character of the neighborhood changes to residential. Small houses rather well kept up, cost range probably \$3,000. to \$12,000. The neighborhood is predominately negro and has received considerable attention over the past years in terms of improvement. It is not a totally negro area, but predominately negro. Residential area continues on past Patterson Avenue, which is a main east west thoroughfare, past Lulu Street, where it begins to thin out considerably. Park Street is the northbound leg of the US-131. The northern boundary designated by Hopkins Street, the character changes abruptly to rural, although there is some subdivision construction further out. Turning right on Hopkins Street and passing Church, looking south it appears to be the same kind of general type of residential described along Park. Going further east to Union Street on Hopkins the area is not quite as good as the Park Street area. At Rose Street it is about the same as . The next street is Burdick and this is also residential to the south of Hopkins, but takes on an industrial character to the north where some of the Kalamazoo plants are located. Trom Street is again residential



Note Report A  
April 22, 1970

RALPH J. STEPHENSON  
CONSULTING ENGINEER

Page nineteen

in nature and the easterly boundary is Edwards Street, which is also residential. Turning right on Edwards, the houses appear to be fairly well kept also. A large industrial district is directly across the railroad tracks to the east. Home prices in this area are probably \$9,000. to \$13,000. The homes appear to be reasonably kept up. Some are painted and some have definately improved. It appears that the association work may be actively in play here encouraging improvement of the residences. Edwards goes south of Patterson where it jogs to the right and contains, at this intersection, a small commercial center. Heading south on Edwards to Bush we pass the Gibson Guitar Plant, which has been expanded over the years. This plant extends from Bush to Parsons Street.