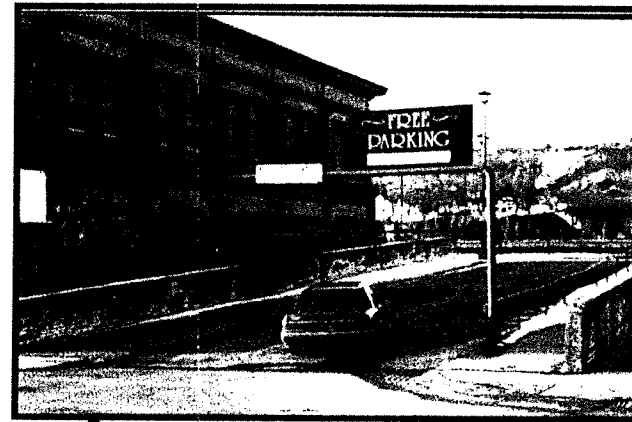


## GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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- Avoid duplicate signage information. Strive to convey the message to the motorist or pedestrian in simple terms and graphic symbols that are easily understood.
- Provide community maps at key outdoor public locations. This type of information is especially helpful to visitors.
- Allow people to see workplaces by making them visible and attractive. The Library Bar has done this by showcasing their brewing equipment in the front of their new restaurant. Allowing people to watch other people is a great way to help people remain in touch with how the world operates.



*Signage information need not be duplicated to reduce clutter.*

## GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES



### 4. Calm traffic

- Develop raised crosswalks or intersections to allow pedestrians a dry place to walk and where they are more visible to motorists.
- Use curbs to define where vehicles may drive and where they may not.
- Decrease the turning radius at intersections. This forces vehicles to reduce their speed when turning. It also provides for a shorter distance between opposite curbs for the pedestrian crossing.
- Build upon the existing grid system and urban fabric surrounding it within the development district.
- Contrast paving materials at crosswalks to provide a visual reminder to drivers to reduce their speed.
- Wide sidewalks and narrow traffic lanes should be encouraged. Minimum sized travel lanes encourage drivers to reduce speeds, drive cautiously, and minimize snow removal efforts.
- Accommodate alternative transportation including bicycling, skiing, snowmobiles, rollerblades, and skateboards.



*Raised crosswalks or intersections would help to eliminate this uncomfortable condition and calm traffic.*

## GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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### **5. Relate architecture to the surrounding environment.**

Using principles of design including building mass, proportion, scale, color and textures new and existing buildings can relate strongly to their surroundings. This helps to establish a feeling of continuity and unity within the study area. Continuity and unity help to strengthen community character.

- Discourage the use of single colors or blank walls.
- Utilize color, texture and architectural detailing to create attractive facades that compliment rather than strongly contrast adjacent buildings.
- Clearly differentiate between residential neighborhoods and other land use intensities.
- Build to a human scale. Recognize the proportion and size of well designed elements found within the study area and work to compliment those, rather than stand apart from them.
- Use quality exterior materials to guarantee lower maintenance over a longer life span.
- Discourage the use of highly reflective surfaces that create unsafe and unpleasant glare.
- Attempt to screen building service and loading areas, dumpsters, mechanical equipment and utilities from public view.

## GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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**6. Provide an attractive landscape.** Plant materials and landscape improvements provide functional, environmental and aesthetic benefits. These include visual screening, windbreaks, defining spaces, controlling circulation and defining architectural features.

- Despite our short growing season our climate is well suited to growing many hardy plant materials. Providing for an attractive landscape is an important part of making people feel welcome and comfortable in the community.
- Incorporate small pockets of green space throughout vacant or underutilized property.
- Soften walls and mine rock rip-rap with plantings that include spreading ground covers, vines, shrubs and evergreens.
- Use landscape lighting throughout the year to provide a feeling of warmth and safety and add color throughout the community.



*The cold, harsh appearance of steep mine rock slopes can be softened and improved with the introduction of vegetation in the landscape.*

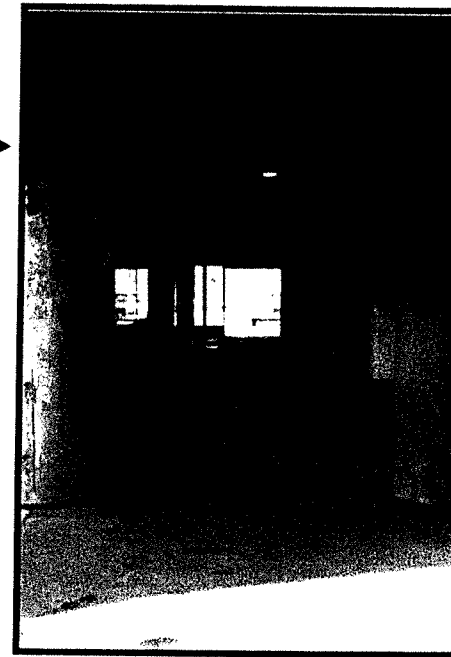
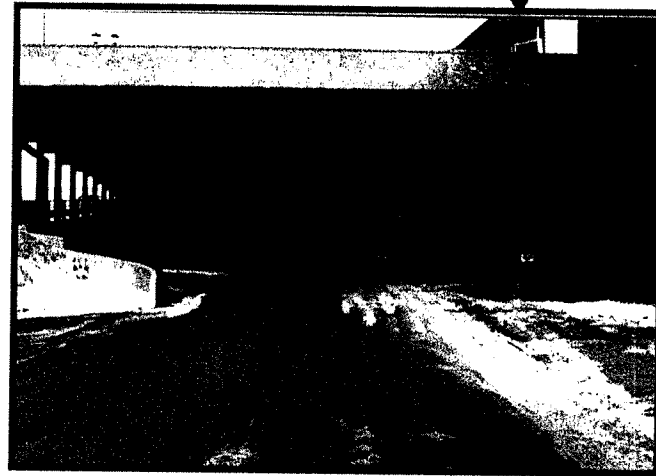
## GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES



### 7. Create a feeling of safety and security.

- Provide adequate lighting at night and eliminate dark concealed spaces where trouble may begin.
- Encourage police to make their presence known in the district by foot or bike patrols and interacting with the community.
- Interesting storefronts attract people to walk in the downtown. Busy downtowns are safer than empty downtowns.

*Lighting improvements are needed in public walkways to improve visibility and safety.*



## GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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### 8. Accommodate families, children, and pets.

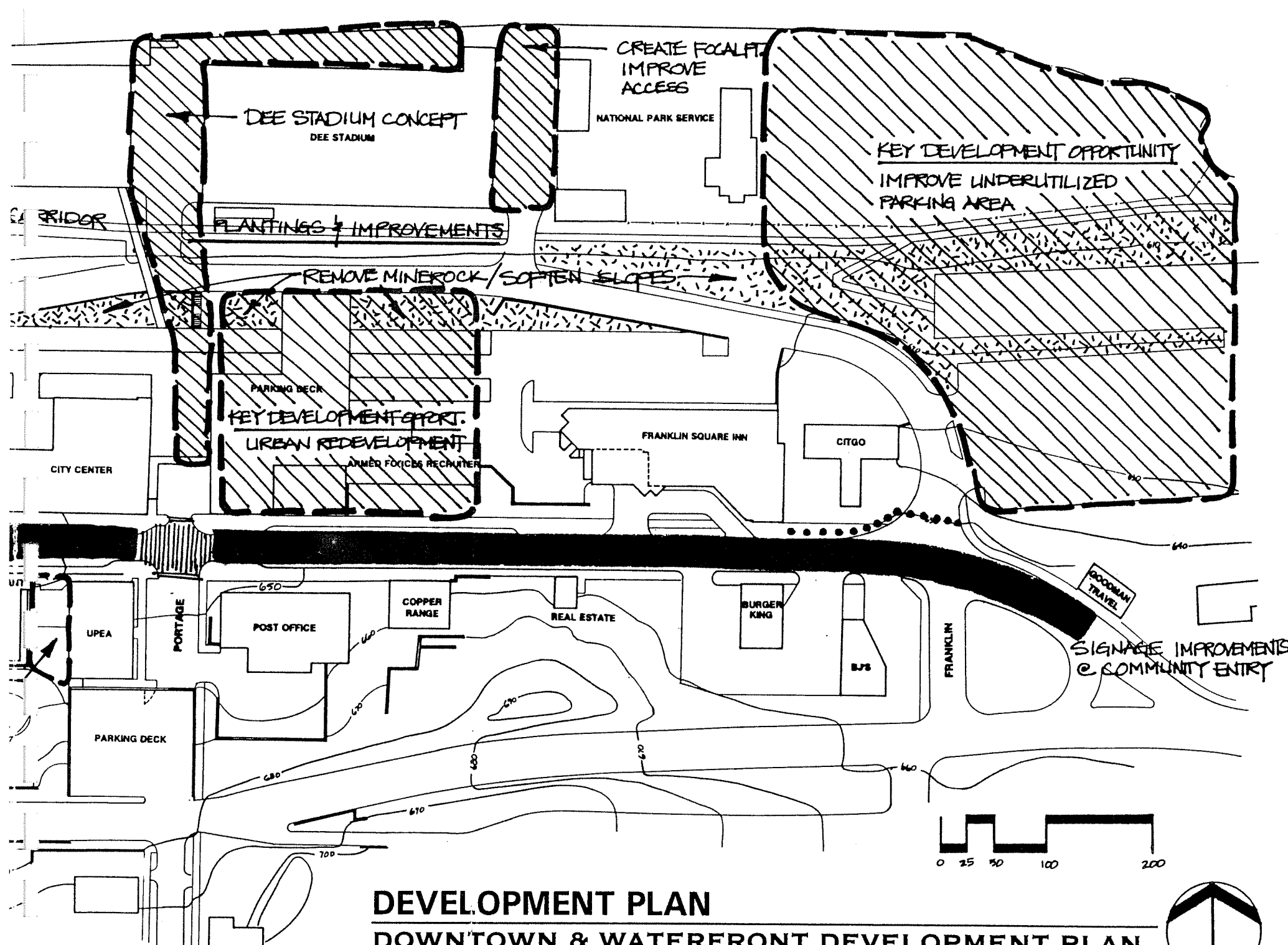
- Provide changing tables for infants in public restrooms for men and women.
- Provide child scale playgrounds or play opportunities in the development district for children with ample seating for adult supervision. This will encourage positive community interaction.
- Encourage retailers to accommodate kids by providing activity centers for kids to color or play while parents shop. This is a courtesy that parents appreciate and acknowledge by purchasing goods and services at your establishment.
- Visitors travel with pets and many residents walk with pets. Providing places for pets to exercise and tools for waste cleanup is one way to help pet owners be polite.
- Pets encourage interaction among people.

### 9. Duplicate successful examples.

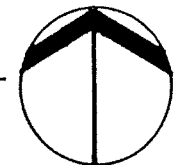
- People learn by imitating others from an early age. Look at successful communities with climatic and cultural similarities and duplicate their efforts.

### 10. Reward efforts to better the community.

- An artfully designed plaque of modest size could be given to individuals and proprietors as a reward for improvements within the specified project area.



**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
 CITY OF HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN







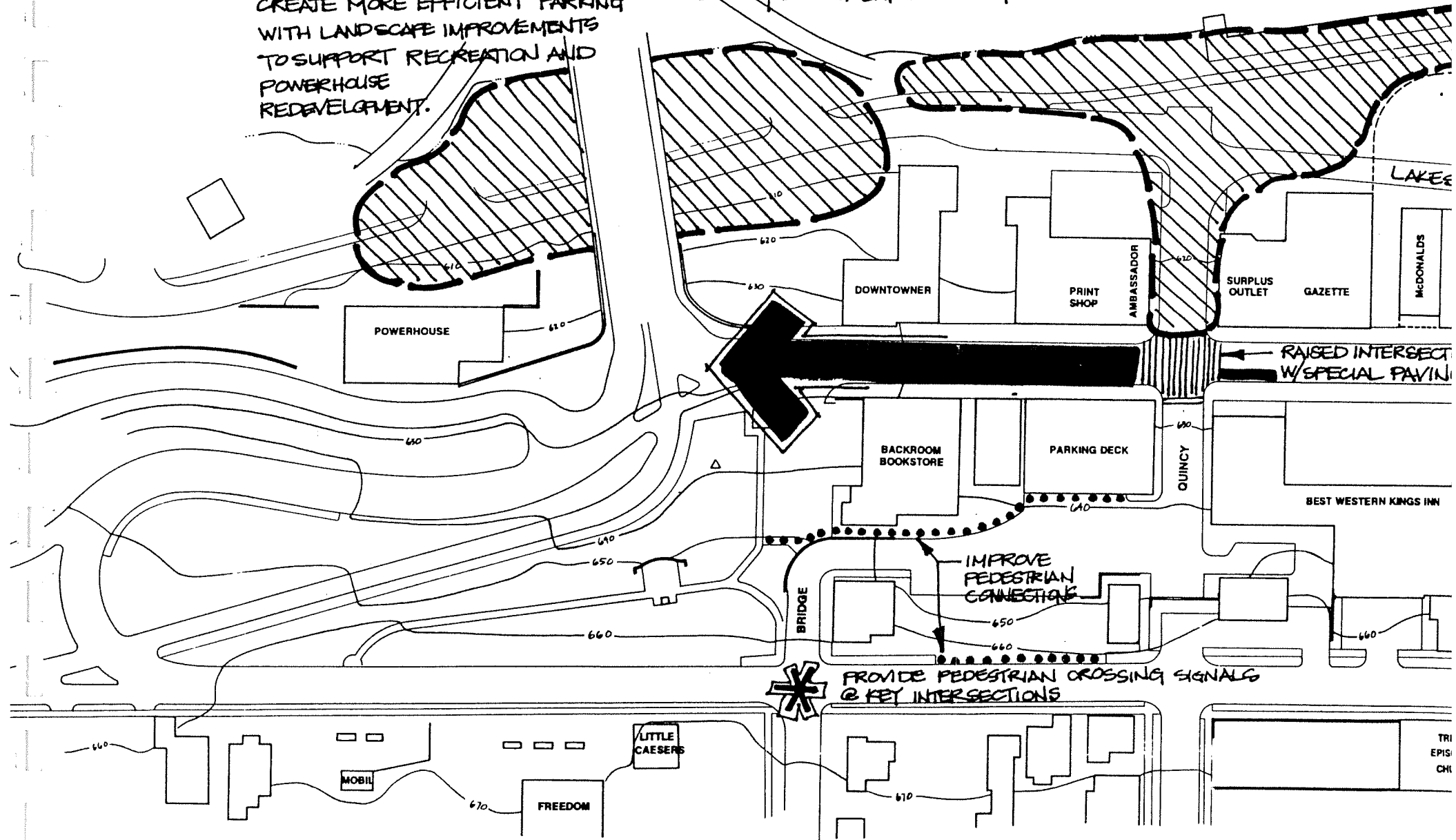
SHELDEN AVE. STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

WATERFRONT

- CALM TRAFFIC
- PEDESTRIAN COMFORTS/AMENITIES
- FACADE & BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS
- REGULARLY SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE
- SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENTS
- CODE & ZONING ENFORCEMENT

- SCENE OVER
- BENCHES & U
- INTERPRET
- FLOATING D
- LIGHTING

KEY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY  
 CREATE MORE EFFICIENT PARKING  
 WITH LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS  
 TO SUPPORT RECREATION AND  
 POWERHOUSE  
 REDEVELOPMENT.



## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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As a result of our data collection to this point, a number of potential projects and areas have been identified as worthy of consideration for improvement efforts. Some concepts have been reviewed by the city planning commission and the resulting preliminary drawings are included for consideration. Others appear in written form only as a project description along with an explanation of the project significance and potential benefits to the community.

### **Waterfront park improvements concept**

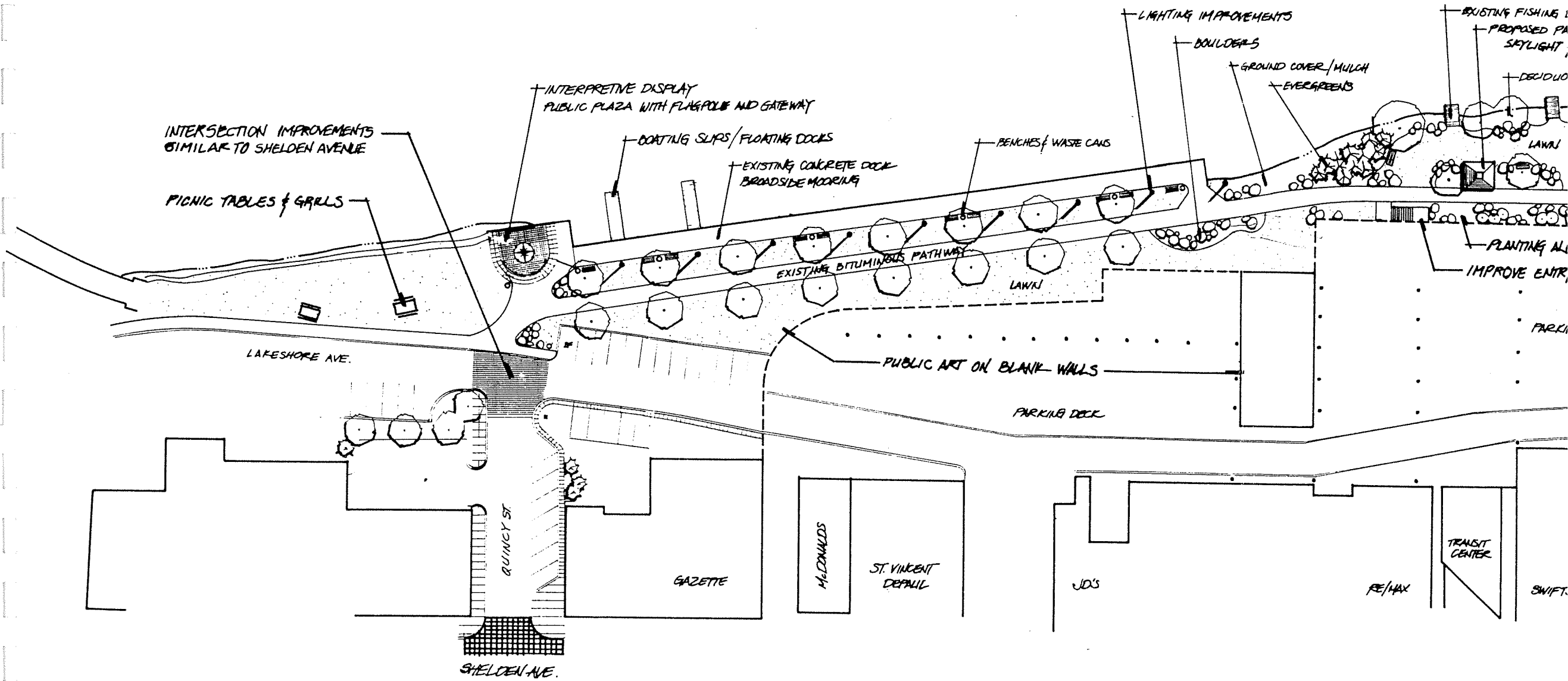
Recommended waterfront improvements focus on the waterfront pathway and the surrounding corridor. Already a popular recreation asset to the city, the path offers a critical link between different use areas along the Portage Lake waterway. The area north of the large downtown parking structure between Gundlach Champion and the Portage Lake Lift Bridge is an important candidate for improvements. This area is very visible from the bridge, the Houghton County Marina and various points in the downtown. Also of great importance is the surrounding landscape easily seen from this location and open for interpretation with the development of an exhibit.

By improving this area with a small public plaza, welcome gate and viewing area with an interpretive exhibit, Houghton can expect to benefit from increased activity and use of the waterfront from visitors and residents alike. The addition of a tree arcade along the length of pathway adjacent the broadside mooring will assist with defining the trail through all seasons.

It will also provide an orderly appearance to the park area. The addition of a few floating docks to accommodate smaller vessels and the provision of site furnishings, including benches, litter receptacles and additional pedestrian scale ornamental site lighting round out the improvements for this area.

East of the broadside mooring area and west of the Gundlach Champion building is a small vacant area suitable for an informal garden complete with a small pavilion. This location works well with the annual seafood festival celebrated in conjunction with Bridgefest each year. The informal garden area with several conifers, shrubbery, lawn area and boulders to sit on offers an inexpensive park improvement well suited to passive leisurely use. Conifers provide a bit of a windbreak, frame the view from the pavilion and add year round interest and color. A fire pit in the pavilion extends the usefulness of this area into seasons beyond summer.

See the waterfront park improvements concept drawing.



**WATERFRONT PARK IMPROVEME**  
**DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT DEVE**  
 CITY OF HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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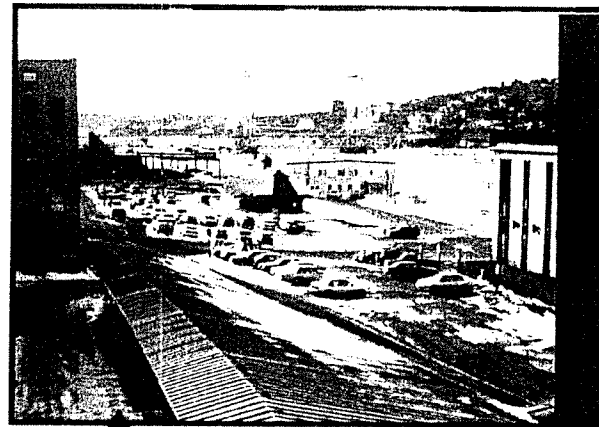


### **Mattila Square Concept**

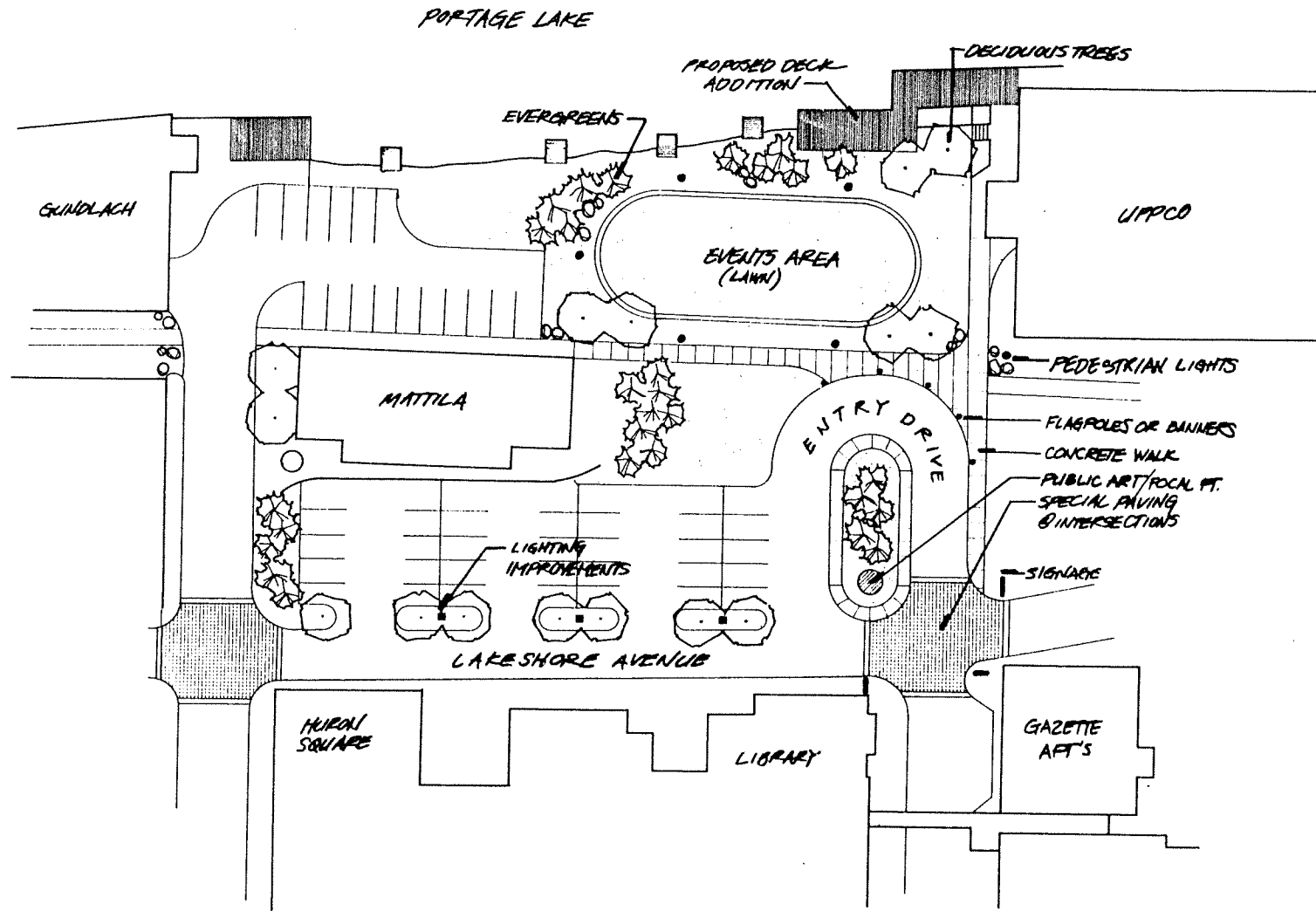
Development of a central gathering place near the waterfront and the downtown is an idea that has received positive feedback from citizens. The area referred to as "Mattila Square" is bounded by Isle Royale Street, Huron Street, Lakeshore Avenue and Portage Lake. This area could benefit visually by the addition and provision of better auto and pedestrian circulation.

The development of restaurants, markets, etc. in this area could assist with linking the downtown to the waterfront and providing a stronger framework for the establishment of public open space. This public open space could, in turn, attract people due to the very nature of activities programmed there. Winter carnival, the SCCA road rally and a seasonal outdoor skating rink or other events would benefit from a space that attracts curious onlookers and event participants.

See the Mattila Square concept drawing.

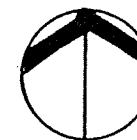


*The development of "Mattila Square" as a public events space with development opportunities would create a natural extension of the downtown to the waterfront.*



# MATTILA SQUARE CONCEPT

DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
CITY OF HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN



## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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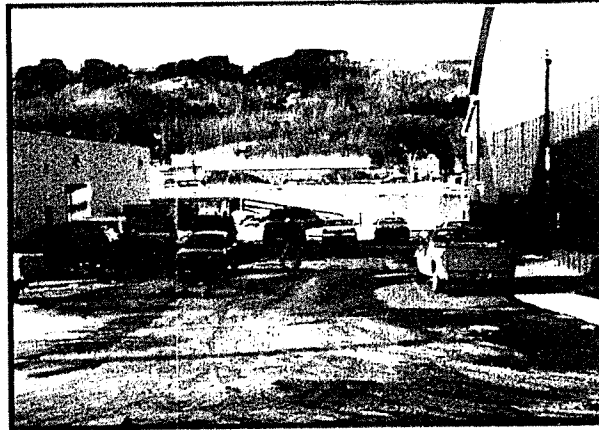
### Dee Stadium

A popular community gathering place for hockey games, figure skating and other community events, the Dee could benefit from a few related projects to improve access, aesthetics and year round use. Development of a stronger pedestrian link to parking facilities, a new entrance treatment, the addition of a history museum room featuring the birthplace of professional hockey and a barrier-free dock facility are all recommended improvements.

Parking around the Dee is found along Lakeshore Avenue but also in the public lot across the street, north of the City Centre. While the distance from the Dee is not a problem, the location of the parking presents access challenges.

The vertical distance between parking and the Dee is greater than 25 feet. Existing enclosed stairs appear to be unsafe and provide a weak link between the two levels. This connection should be strengthened and continued up to the Shelden Avenue level. The use of an elevator to provide barrier-free access is strongly recommended if urban block renewal is undertaken.

A new public connection could be a very visible and attractive element within the landscape.



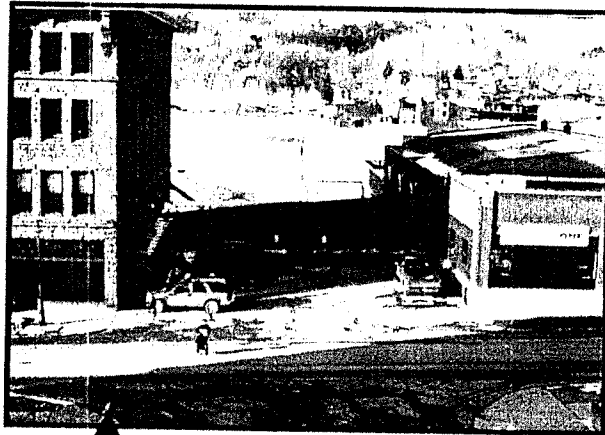
*This space at Dee Stadium would benefit from entrance improvements and development of a public space with site furnishings, lighting and vegetation.*

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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Entrance improvements at the Dee would serve to more clearly identify the entry to the facility as a public building and improve the aesthetics. Removal of excess bituminous paving and attractive site improvements including plantings, site furniture like benches and trash receptacles and lighting could create a more comfortable public space that serves as a landmark within the community. Eliminating the mine rock slope across from the Dee and stabilizing it with an attractive ground cover or planting wall would also be a fine visual improvement.

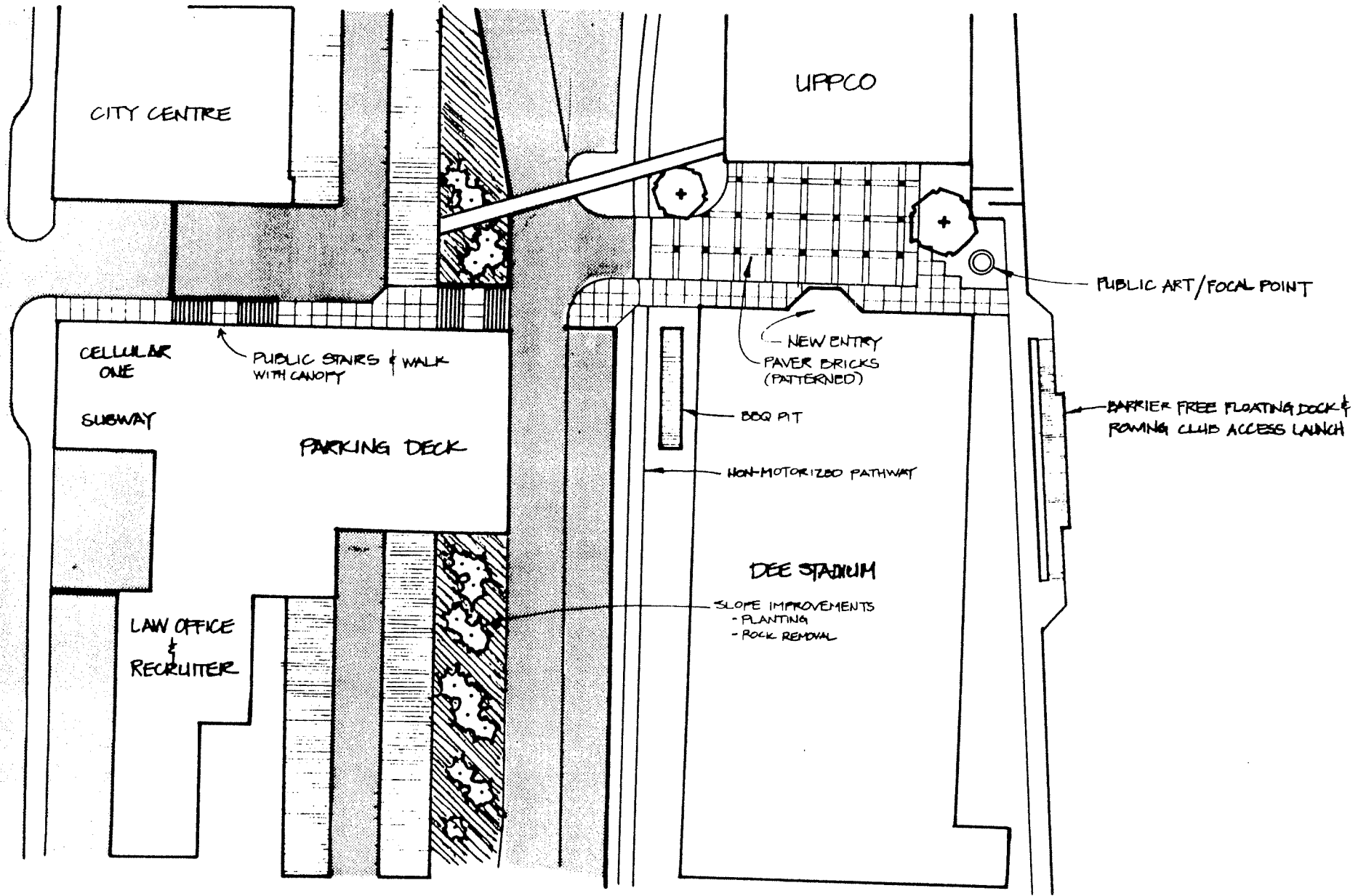


*Strengthen pedestrian connection between Dee Stadium and Shelden Avenue*

The history of hockey at the Dee and in this area is of interest to both locals and visitors. Development of a history room to interpret the sport and the Dee as the birthplace of professional hockey would be an asset to the community and the region.

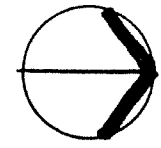
The last recommended improvement for the Dee is the development and construction of a barrier-free dock facility. This location works well for three primary reasons. First the location is central to the downtown waterfront and public recreation facilities. Second, it could easily link to the proposed parking connection elevator on up to Shelden Avenue for access to the tail core of the city. This could open up a view from the downtown to the Dee and to the waterfront. Finally, it would provide for multi-seasonal use of the Dee by the MTU rowing club. This would be an excellent location in the heart of the community to provide seasonal storage and access for the long rowing shells used in the sport. It offers an opportunity to add interest and activity along the waterfront.

See the Dee Stadium concept drawing.



# DEE STADIUM CONCEPT

DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
 CITY OF HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN



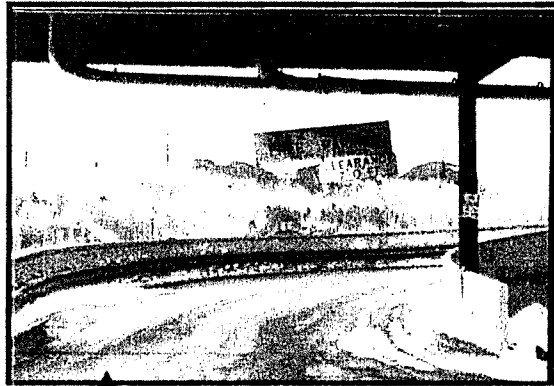




### **Parking Deck Maintenance & Improvements**

The parking deck north of the central retail district is in need of repair and maintenance. Several projects are suggested to improve the appearance of this area and to provide better pedestrian links to retail and activity areas. Repairs to the parapet wall, handrails and guardrails are needed along with signage improvements and improvements to the stairways and pedestrian links.

Lakeshore Avenue is in need of a physical separation from the parking area below this parking deck. Additional lighting is also needed to address safety concerns for both autos and pedestrian traffic. These two improvements would help make this area more comfortable and give an added sense of security to motorists and pedestrians. Dumpster sharing and screening could also improve the appearance of this area.



*This signage does not create an inviting entry for motorists.*

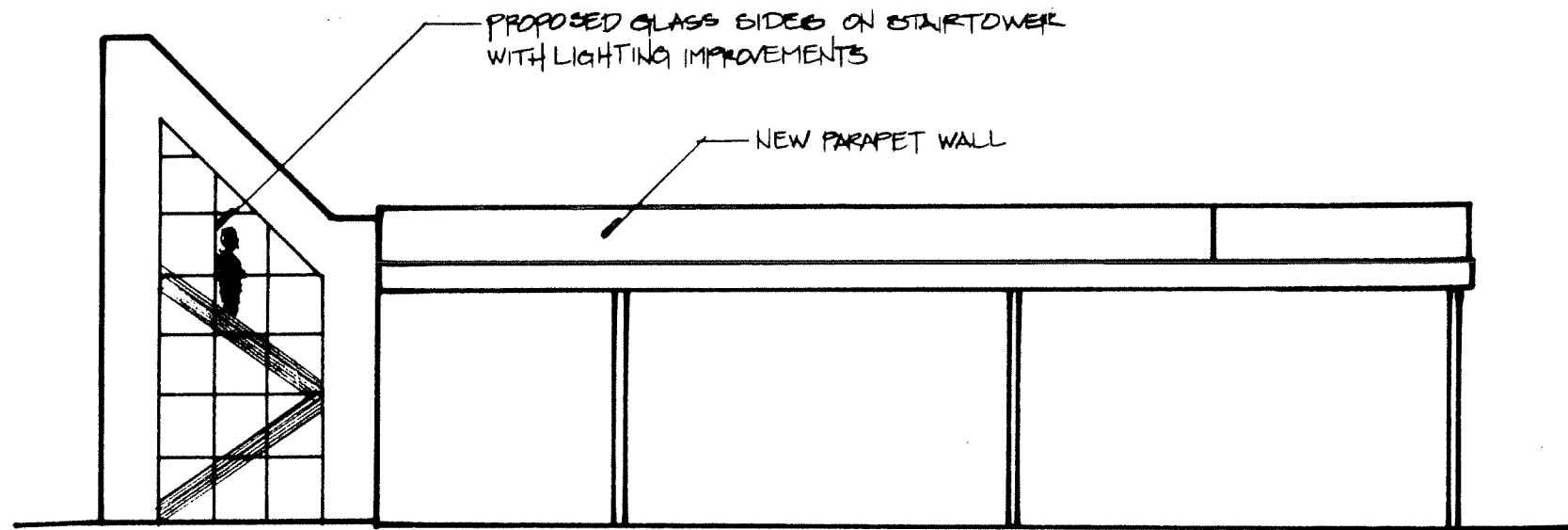
The parapet wall is deteriorating due to the freeze and thaw cycles of moisture trapped within the brick cap and coursing below. Repair of the structure should consider a new cap to prevent this problem in the future. Additionally, the east side of this deck was not a finished edge at the time the deck was constructed. This is because the deck adjoined a structure at the time of construction. Since that building was demolished the exposed unfinished edge is visible from the "Mattila Square" area. Construction of a parapet wall along this edge would help the appearance of this structure.

Guardrails and handrails should be inspected for needed repairs. Many of them are dented, bent or in need of replacement or paint. Sharp edges should be eliminated from support posts and rails.

Pedestrian stairways and linkages are dark and uninviting. Currently they are difficult to see into and the question of safety arises for people who wish to pass through them. The stairways and pedestrian links to the downtown could be improved by adding windows and lighting to give a more open and inviting appearance, as well as a greater sense of security to the users.

All of these improvements are important as they relate directly to public safety. Increased safety leads to a greater level of comfort for customers, merchants, residents and visitors within the downtown. This greater level of comfort and security translates into more time and dollars spent in the district.

See the public parking deck stairway concept drawing.



PARKING DECK - EAST ELEVATION

**PUBLIC PARKING DECK STAIRWAY CONCEPT**  
**DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**CITY OF HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN**



### **Covered Streets**

While opinions from residents are varied about the covered street there is consensus that the structures do offer benefits to motorists and pedestrians in the form of reduced snow removal and protection from the elements on a steep slope. The street has become a landmark and a key part of the circulation system within the community. Issues surrounding this street are primarily related to three major areas of concern: visual improvements to the structures, lighting improvements under the canopies and eliminating ice formation on sidewalks below the structures.

The structures could be improved visually with the addition of an exterior finish that is compatible with the surrounding architecture. The entries to the covered streets could function as gateways to the waterfront if they receive facade improvements.

Lighting improvements are also needed below the existing canopies as the area currently appears quite dark and unsafe even during sunny days. The addition of better lighting below the canopies or the construction of skylights to allow natural light enter would greatly improve visibility and pedestrian comfort along this street. Perhaps a combination of these two possible solutions would work best for all conditions.

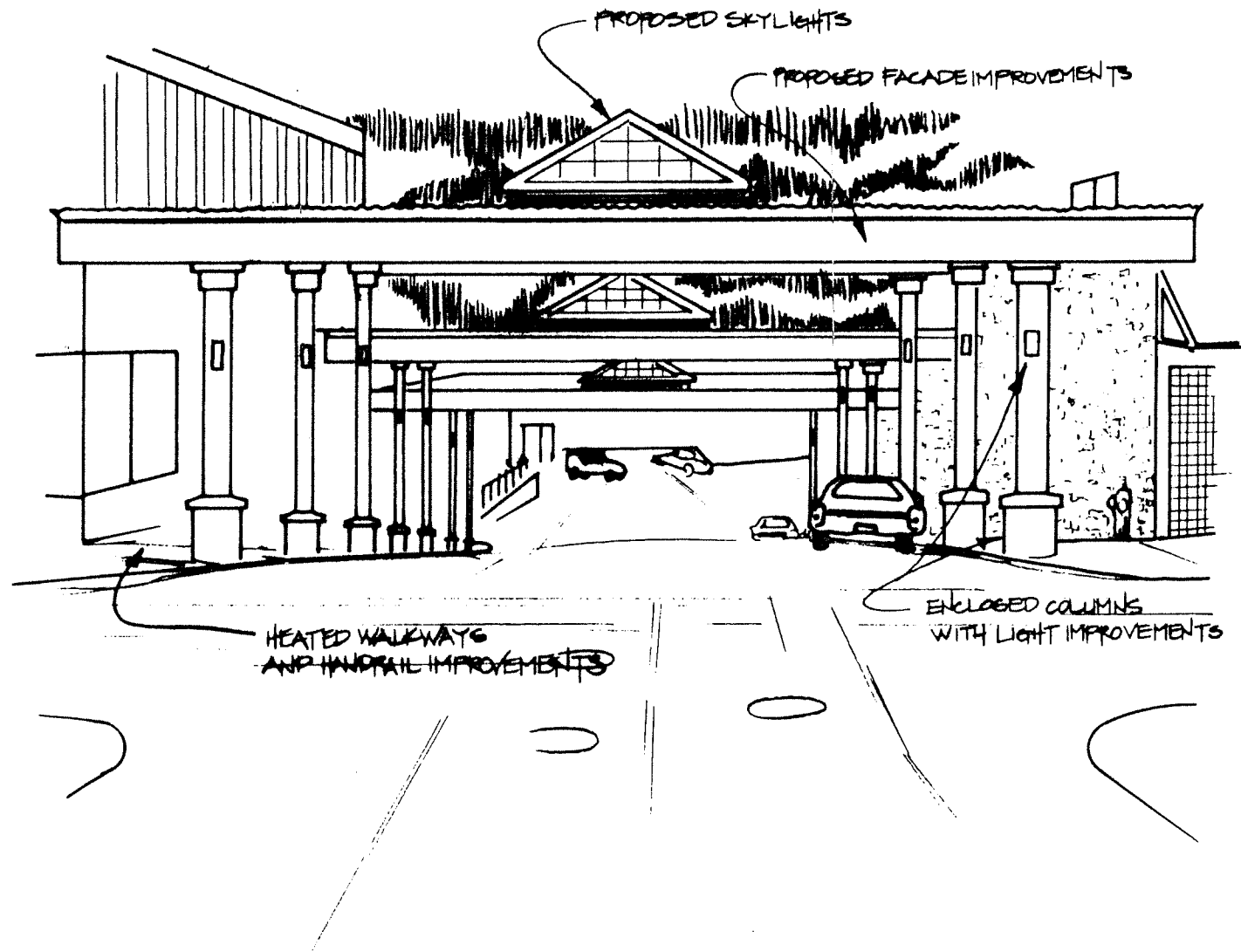
Painting the underside of the structure a lighter color would allow light to be reflected more easily and make the area easier to illuminate. Blank walls could benefit from a similar treatment.

The cool conditions below the covered street make sidewalks prone to icing. The frequent maintenance of these walks could be reduced through the installation of a heated concrete walk with a thermostat or timer to regularly eliminate icy conditions.

A safer north to south pedestrian and automobile link between Montezuma Street and Mattila Square would be beneficial to the community. This location is central within the study area and located near the public library and elderly housing.

The final alternative for consideration for these structures is their permanent removal from the downtown. Either partially or completely they may be removed to allow for maintenance operations like any other street in the city. This solution would have less negative impacts on traffic movement now than when the structures were constructed. This is largely due to the advances in automotive transportation and the alternate travel routes that exist now via Lakeshore Drive and city wide circulation improvements made since the canopies were built.

See the covered street concept drawing.



## **COVERED STREET CONCEPT**

**DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
CITY OF HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN**

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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### Isle Royale Street Skywalk

The walkway between MFC and the Library restaurant is no longer in service. The elimination or improvement of the stairway is recommended.

Improvement of the walkway requires better lighting and visibility. Additional directional signage would also be needed. In a community with ample room for retail growth at the street level, this action should be carefully considered. Is the second floor level where the community wants to encourage retail growth or would this growth be better served on the street level?

The removal of this structure would reestablish the view to the Portage Lake and Mattila Square from a highly visible intersection in the downtown. Architecturally it would remove an incompatible element from a corner where the buildings possess a high degree of architectural integrity. For these reasons we favor the removal of this structure from the study area.

It is possible that the structure may be used elsewhere as a pedestrian bridge with or without the canopy.



*Removal of the abandoned skywalk at Isle Royale Street would open the view to the waterway and the "Mattila Square" area.*

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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### **Public Library Expansion**

Currently the Portage Lake District Library is short on space to adequately meet their needs and public demands. An independent needs analysis by a professional library consultant is not yet finalized but preliminary findings indicate a need for a much larger facility.

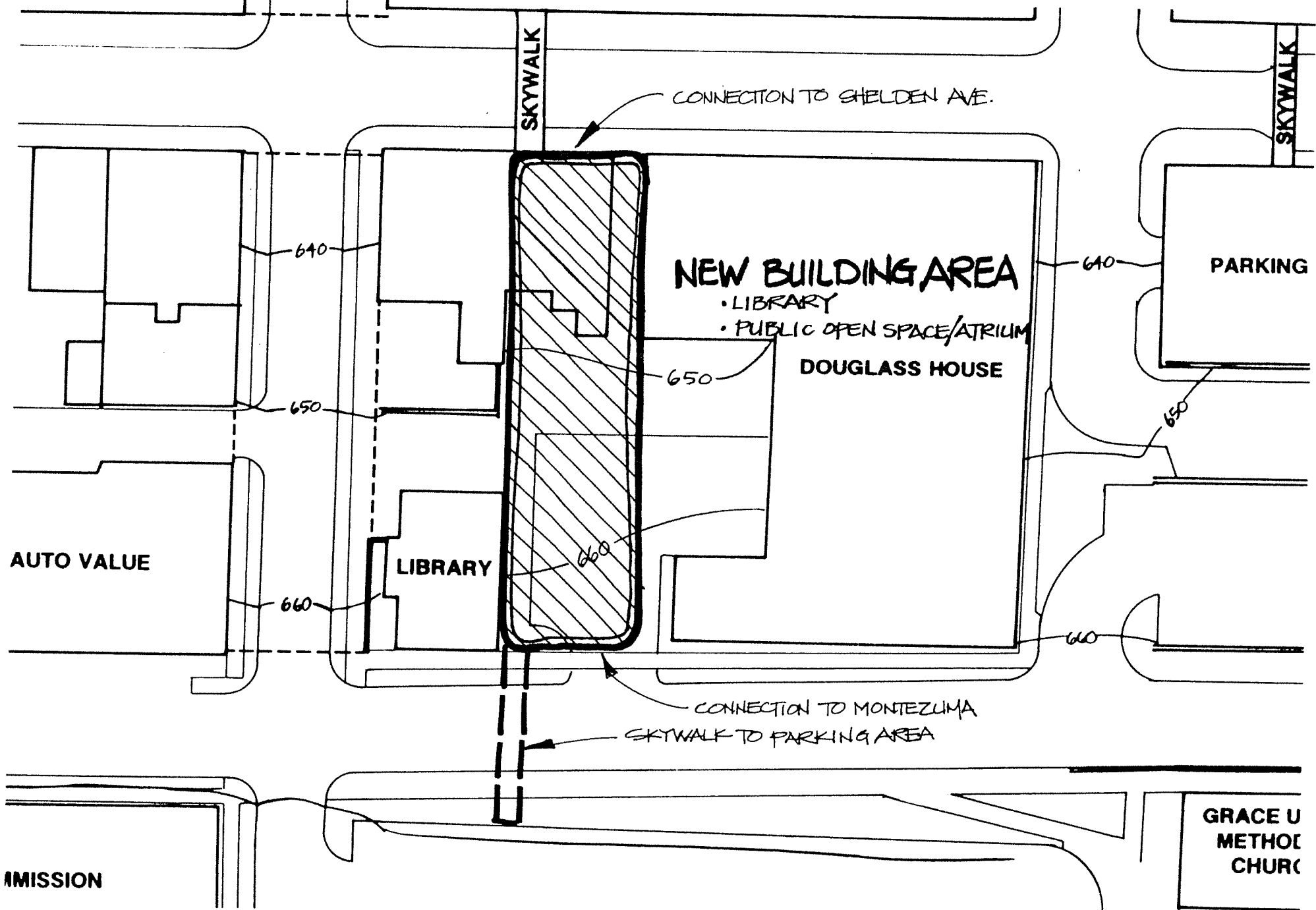
The existing library site proves difficult for a large expansion without going to a multilevel addition. If this type of expansion should occur, we recommend the following suggestions be considered.

- Provide a connection from the housing facilities south of Montezuma and in the Douglass House to the public library.
- Provide a street level connection to Shelden Ave for improved access to the public realm.
- Consider the development of a public interior space within the above mentioned connections. Possible activities include a winter garden/interior greenspace or an indoor play area for children.

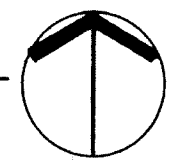
These improvements would help utilize parking found south of Montezuma in an underutilized lot and easier access for senior citizens to public library resources. The provision of an indoor play area offers an attraction for seniors and their grandchildren as well as a safe activity area for downtown shoppers to take a short break with kids. This added convenience may encourage shoppers to spend more time shopping in the downtown district.

Another option for the library is the construction of a new and separate facility. If this activity is undertaken it is strongly recommended to find a suitable site within the core of the study area to avoid displacement and separation of public services. One possibility for consideration is the redevelopment of the city block between the Franklin Square Inn and the City Centre. See the information about urban renewal later in this document for more information about this subject.

See the library expansion concept drawing.



**PUBLIC LIBRARY EXPANSION CONCEPT**  
**DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
 CITY OF HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN



## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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### **Retail Recruitment**

It has been said that "success breeds success". Certainly this is true in business where successful businesses attract customers and foster other business opportunities. There are a number of things that can be done to foster a stronger business climate and attract desirable retail to the downtown.

One important step towards making retail improvements is the initiation of a professional market study to identify opportunities in the district. This type of study can provide valuable information about how the downtown can be strengthened by satisfying existing market demands. The City may consider waiting until year 2000 census data is available for a study of this type.

The City of Ishpeming recently hired the professional business consultant Hyett-Palma to undertake just such a study. They were very pleased with the valuable information learned from an independent national consultant with excellent credentials. We recommend this type of activity to determine opportunities available to the community and downtown/waterfront district.

Additionally, we recommend businesses look individually and collectively towards improving design related issues including building storefront and facades improvements, historic preservation of significant contributing buildings and retail development education and seminars.

Attractive facades and inviting storefronts with window displays are the invitation for people to stop and visit an establishment. By improving the quality of business storefronts, signage and displays the district will have greater curb appeal to the desired customers and a greater ability to attract new business to the area.

Equally important is the retail development activity and education that occurs. Business owners can never learn too much about creative ways to display, advertise and market their goods and services. Bringing a recognized expert into town for their ideas and suggestions could prove extremely valuable to merchants and retailers.

Finally, the downtown development authority should take a lead role in seeking out new desirable business prospects and encouraging them to locate in the downtown. Approach retailers that could serve as an "anchor" within the downtown to locate there. Target specific merchants that you want in the district and pursue them.





**Maintenance**

Maintaining a clean community is very important and directly impacts the ability to attract and retain visitors and shoppers. People notice and enjoy clean communities.



*The district is negatively affected by visual clutter, open storage and a lack of property maintenance by private business owners.*



*Prompt repair of damage is critical to maintaining an attractive district.*

The development of a maintenance schedule for regular inspection and policing of the study area is one way to accomplish this task in conjunction with other DPW responsibilities. By prioritizing needs the most important tasks can be accomplished first on a regular basis.

Using volunteer efforts can also assist with seasonal maintenance like the recently completed spring cleanup along Sheldon Avenue. Leaf raking in the fall and removal of mine rock from selected areas are activities that may be considered in the future.

The benefit to these activities is increased community pride and a real sense of ownership among citizens. This can improve "community policing" efforts and also help to reduce vandalism.

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN □

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### Streetscape Issues

Addressing the needs of shoppers & pedestrians in this district requires several improvements to the streetscape along Shelden Avenue. Because Shelden Avenue is the primary commercial corridor and the backbone of the existing downtown retail district it requires a larger investment in public infrastructure and amenities to adequately meet public needs.

Five key issues have been identified as playing a key role in the development of an attractive streetscape along Shelden Avenue. Each of the following issues will be addressed along with proposed improvements.

- Infrastructure improvements
- Pedestrian amenities
- Signage/wayfinding
- Visual issues
- Maintenance

**Infrastructure Improvements** in this case refer specifically to circulation of motorized and non-motorized traffic as well as utilities that serve the district. Currently the following issues should be addressed:

- Pedestrian circulation should be encouraged and improved through sidewalk repair and replacement programs targeting areas currently lacking walks and needing repairs. This is a public safety issue.

- Raised crosswalks and intersections should be considered to better accommodate pedestrians and help calm the speed of through traffic. Contrasting walkway surface materials would also provide a visual cue to motorists.
- Public skywalks and enclosed public walkways that are not currently used should be removed.
- Pedestrian lighting improvements are needed throughout the length of Shelden Avenue in the downtown district to achieve better illumination at night.
- Any above ground utilities should be kept to an absolute minimum to avoid added snow removal problems and to reduce visual clutter.
- Stop lights at Isle Royale Street could be improved with arm mounted fixtures. This would increase visibility and safety.

**Pedestrian Amenities** are items found in a comfortable pedestrian environment. These items make the district more user friendly and attractive.

- Provide public seating in the form of benches, movable seats, planter edges and low seat walls.
- Provide matching street furnishings and litter receptacles throughout the district.
- Provide small ash urns at entries to encourage smokers to dispose of their cigarette butts properly.
- Provide bicycle racks for cyclists to lock their bikes.

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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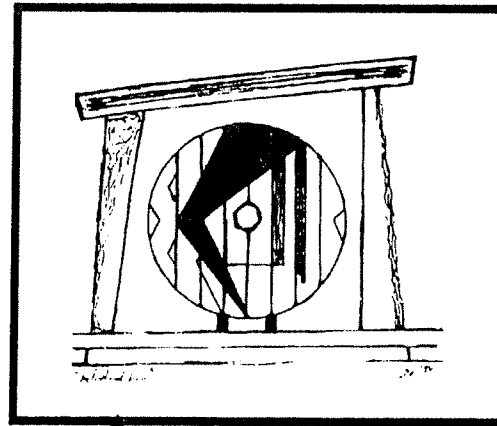
**Signage/Wayfinding** should be addressed to provide signage that is both functional and attractive. Development of a signage package for public signs and information should address the following:

- Directional signage to assist people in moving through the community.
- Informational signage to identify landmarks, buildings and public spaces.
- Informational kiosks for the display of public postings in key locations.
- Eliminate signage that is out of character within the district.
- Reduce the size of signs that are too large for the scale and character of the district.
- Eliminate duplicate signage information.

**Visual Issues** to be addressed within the district include the aforementioned items and the following:

- The lack of unity and color within the district. This can be improved with street furnishings and vegetation as well as the development of private facade improvements.
- Parking deck entrances can be better defined with architectural gateways and a color scheme matching or complementing the street furnishings.
- Blank concrete and block retaining walls can receive finish coatings to improve their appearance.

- Excessive use of mine rock can be softened or replaced with vegetation to add warmth, color and interest to the district.
- Public art that responds to the physical, cultural and environmental conditions of the community can be funded to add visual interest in the environment.



*Local artists can create works that reflect ideas and elements within the region.  
Sketch courtesy of TOSH Gallery.*

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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*Maintenance* of the urban streetscape can be improved by public and private efforts to address the following:

- Litter removal
- Graffiti cleanup in a timely manner
- Watering, weeding, mulching and general care of planters and vegetation in the district
- Remove garbage from alleys and eliminate outdoor storage areas
- Replace building lights burned out
- Repair parking deck and public walkways
- Enforce existing ordinances pertaining to maintenance.

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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### **Urban renewal area**

Redevelopment of an entire urban block would offer the opportunity for development of a modern, comprehensive municipal structure linked to public services, retail and parking improvements. Improvements could include new city and public safety offices, chamber of commerce visitor center, public transportation office and the inclusion of existing retail uses within the building. A new public library could occupy its own level of the structure while offering a spectacular view of the Portage Lake waterway. All of these spaces could be developed around an attractive public lobby/atrium with elevators, community postings and interior seating. A new structure could provide an efficient multilevel public parking deck at the lower levels between Shelden and Lakeshore Avenues. Access could be provided from one or both streets. This parking facility is centrally located to key uses in the downtown including Dee Stadium, The Franklin Square Inn convention center and public services.

Any space currently occupied and vacated by these public services would prove to be valuable retail space along the north side of Shelden Ave. This opportunity is an appealing part of this concept along with the opportunity to design a structure that better serves the public through an efficient integration of public services in the core of downtown Houghton.



**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

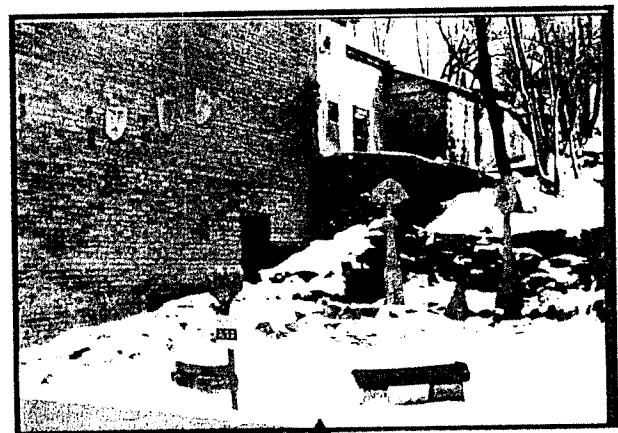
**Citizen groups**

The establishment of volunteer community based organizations aimed at beautification improvements and promoting area history within the community would greatly assist the city in several ways. These groups could independently address projects and effectively improve the community outreach efforts to visitors.

A group of volunteers with working plant knowledge and gardening maintenance skills could oversee minor projects that include planting, pruning and fertilizing of specific areas. This is an activity that can include nursery persons, 4-H members, volunteer service groups, families and the elderly.

Along with the development of a beautification committee a community nursery could be developed. Using an underutilized plot of land with suitable soil conditions, small plant materials purchased from nursery grown stock can be grown to a size suitable for transplanting later to project areas within the community. This type of operation can go a long way towards planting improvements at moderate cost to the community.

Likewise, a group of citizens interested in communicating the region's history can work towards the development of interpretive exhibits and events for public enjoyment. One possible approach to this is development of a history room in the Dee Stadium as the birthplace of professional hockey. A community based historical society could greatly assist in this type of interpretation. Other possibilities are seemingly endless.



*The development of private green spaces and landscapes displaying public art greatly improve the character of the district at modest cost.*

## ***DEVELOPMENT PLAN***

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### **Development regulations**

Due to the unique features found within this study area and the intense investment in public and private development, we recommend the city consider updating current zoning ordinance regulations for this special district. New regulations should incorporate landscaping standards, open storage of refuse and issues that address aesthetics.

Enforcement of regulations established within the zoning ordinance should be addressed by the city to promote a more attractive downtown and waterfront.

## *SUMMARY/CONCLUSION*

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The City of Houghton, Michigan is a community that residents can be proud of. The physical and environmental characteristics of the City set it apart from others in the State of Michigan. By continuing to be proactive in development efforts, while embracing the values of residents and visitors, the city will flourish. It is possible to meet the needs of people both today and tomorrow while respecting the historic character of the downtown and waterfront district.

Although this development plan has outlined and presented several concepts and ideas that will take a great deal of work and effort to implement, the city is now well positioned to move forward with a plan to base decisions on. The development of this development plan is firmly grounded in the impact of residents and city officials received during the development of its content. The plan should allow residents, city officials and developers to examine opportunities that exist within this important district.

To help achieve successful results with the actions recommended in this guidebook we offer four simple suggestions.

- **Prioritize projects** in the order of importance to the community. Those offering the greatest benefit to residents should be taken on first.
- **Develop community consensus.** Approach projects viewed favorably by residents after providing them with the information needed to make educated decisions.
- **Phase projects as needed** to accomplish the desired results. Don't hesitate to split larger projects into several smaller and more manageable tasks to be completed in full.
- **Focus on quality.** Never compromise the quality of a project in favor of more projects. Complete all projects to a level which reflects functional and attractive aspects of good design and is well received by the user group it is intended to serve.



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## APPENDIX

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### **PUBLIC ISSUES & CONCERNS**

The following issues and concerns were presented by residents that attended the community open house for the expressed purpose of gathering input towards community planning in the downtown and waterfront district. The meeting was held Wednesday, January 14 in the City of Houghton council chambers.

**Visual Concerns-** The following items were viewed as having negative visual impacts on the character of public spaces within the study area.

- Lighting-not bright enough
- MDOT truss sign-too big
- Signage too big
- Streetscape Issues-lacks unity & color
- Utilities above ground-unsightly
- Skywalks-eyesores
- Parking decks-need cosmetic improvements
- Lack of vegetation-too stark
- Mine rock and retaining walls-unfinished
- Alleys-dirty & unsafe
- Lack of Public Art-missing element

**Business Issues-**These issues were identified as areas requiring improvement in the study area.

- Gaps in Retail along Sheldon Ave.
- Inconsistent hours of operation
- Lack of new business recruitment
- Perceived lack of public safety
- Tourist appeal is lacking

**Waterfront Issues-**These items were identified as requiring improvement along the waterfront within the study area.

- Docks should be more boater friendly
- Improve landscaping of public spaces
- Define public and private spaces better
- Address land uses adjacent to waterfront
- Strengthen winter use of the waterfront trail