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After the Carr-Lynch-Levine Development Strategy: What Next for Downtown Providence, Rhode Island

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AFTER THE CARR-LYNCH-LEVINE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:
WHAT NEXT FOR DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND?

BY

MARK TREVETHAN MOTTE

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER
OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
AT KINGSTON

FALL, 1986

MASTER OF COMMUNITY PLANNING
RESEARCH PROJECT
OF
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ABSTRACT

This Master's Research Project examines the manner in which the City of Providence reviewed a development strategy prepared by consultants for its downtown, and attempted to generate proposals for a fresh approach to central city planning and management. A profile of the existing political milieu and economic environment are furnished as a context for critiquing the consultants' report and the City's response to their findings. Case studies of alternative methods for promoting public-private partnerships in central cities are then analyzed as a basis for the development of a prototypical planning and management entity tailored to the needs of downtown Providence, Rhode Island.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many individuals who assisted in the research phase of this study. Deserving of my utmost gratitude are Mr. Arthur J. Markos, Director of Planning and Development for the City of Providence and Mr. Kenneth Orenstein, Executive Director of the Providence Foundation. Each has made a contribution of incalculable value to the future of downtown Providence.

Ms. Kathleen Field, Ms. Helen Priske and Mr. Thomas V. Moses, all senior staff at the Providence Department of Planning and Development, were models of support and encouragement, as were veteran policy experts Ms. Charlene Hall and Mr. Glenn Kumekawa of the Downtown Task Force. My thanks to them all for their expert advice and guidance.

Doctors Farhad Atash and Howard H. Foster, Jr. of the University's Graduate Curriculum in Community Planning and Area Development have provided me with an education for which I can offer nothing but heartfelt thanks. This research effort could not have been conducted without them.

Mayor Joseph R. Paolino, Jr. facilitated the hiring of planning interns in the summer of 1986. My thanks to him for allowing me the opportunity of so closely observing his Administration's work in promoting positive planning practices for the benefit of downtown Providence.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: STATEMENT OF ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

"One of the great causes of problems is solutions."

Eric Severeid, 1976

"For every complex and difficult problem there is
one clear and simple solution - and it's wrong."

H.L. Mencken (Attrib.)

1.1 The research issue and objectives

With the submission of the Downtown Development Strategy by consultants Carr, Lynch Associates and Melvin Levine and Associates in March, 1986, the City of Providence Department of Planning and Development is faced with a complicated set of choices for promoting stability and growth in the city core. The central question of this Master's Research Project will be to identify the most beneficial policy options for the creation of a lasting public-private sector pact, geared to stimulating downtown growth.

The analysis will deal first with substantive issues, including: a synopsis of Carr, Lynch's and Levine's work; a review and critique of the Strategy on its face; and an analysis of how downtown Providence is managed currently. The second section will address policy and process issues, including: the City's response to the Strategy upon its reception; input mechanisms aimed at the downtown community in formulating the Strategy (the establishment of a Downtown Strategy Task Force, consisting of professionals and local experts); feedback mechanisms for assessing community response to the Strategy (a survey instrument aimed at downtown interest groups); the generation of planning alternatives; and recommendations for policy adoption and implementation.

1.2 Significance of the problem

The City of Providence is faced with analyzing the

efficacy of a thorough reworking of its downtown plans by independent consultants. The significance of such an opportunity to the present-day planning student is that Providence's downtown is a microcosm of the impacts of current municipal fiscal trends and of the potential for an integrated, institutionalized response to patterns of urban decline.

With the curtailment of federal funding programs, which for many years were a mainstay of local community budgets, city governments have been forced to look to their own more limited resources in the preservation of positive planning practices. Innovation has been spawned primarily by an awareness of the need to stabilize tax bases in a highly competitive economic environment, an environment in which current industrial and commercial location decisions may dictate the health of a city in future decades. The compound effects of failing to promote a community's assets or addressing its problems might prove to be devastating to the economic and social health of an urban area, with implications far beyond the limited boundaries of the CBD.

Urban areas have chosen to ameliorate the impacts of dwindling funding sources in a number of ways. Developing public-private partnerships in downtown revitalization serves both public and private interests by ensuring the more efficient expenditure of capital. Keeping existing uses in the central city, as well as attracting new uses to the core, demands of urban planners skills not previously associated

with municipal government staff. New management techniques which bow to the requisites of private capital (leveraging that capital to behave in a manner which is conducive to the public interest), while preserving a strong awareness of wider community needs, are paramount. One outcome of this new awareness is the concept of quasi-autonomous, quasi-public downtown management entities or 'Downtown Management Corporations', as they have become known.

City legislatures are understanding the need to cede some of their traditional public powers to newly designated agencies with more specific roles and jurisdictions. Clearly, the problems faced by neighborhoods are not replicated in the urban core. Central city planning is geared to furnishing both physical and policy infrastructures designed to foster strong economic development: ensuring the construction and maintenance of an integrated physical infrastructure; providing free-flowing circulation and adequate parking facilities; offering loans at rates well below market prime to supplement venture capital and to improve space absorption levels; providing strategic grant injections into small scale projects which would not otherwise be initiated; coordinating the efforts of existing public and private non-profit agencies geared to servicing downtown uses; and actively marketing the downtown district, the inventory of available space, and the availability of public monies and planning support.

1.3 The conceptual framework

While the goal of this study is to make purposeful recommendations for planning in downtown Providence at the 'metapolicy' level (that is, the strategic rather than the tactical scale), the approach is far from comprehensive. The limited fiscal resources of the municipality, as well as the major emphasis of the City Department of Planning and Development on economic development issues, dictate a political milieu in which public-private partnership and a project-by-project funding approach are mandated. The constraint of prevailing planning practice limits the choices in theoretical alternatives for final recommendations in this study. An implicit objective of this thesis is to propose realistic goals for implementation of a Downtown Development Strategy, the study for which has already been conducted by carefully briefed consultants. A personal, academic preference for freedom in venturing radical alternatives for central city planning is therefore tempered by pre-existing political and planning environments which, at least in Providence, amount to one and the same entity.

For the most part, then, theoretical considerations will not step outside the contextual framework set by the City of Providence. (As shall be demonstrated, this has given rise to enough internal conflict in and of itself.) Rather, a less rationalized approach to the Carr-Lynch-Levine Strategy and its implications for the city is reserved in reviewing and critiquing (a) the recommendations prescribed by the

Strategy (Chapter 5) and (b) alternatives for establishing a new management agency specifically for the downtown area (Chapters 9 and 10).

The aim of the thesis is to go beyond mere cataloging of one task of the Providence Department of Planning and Development; by analyzing the process of establishing an experimental approach to downtown planning, it is hoped that considerable insight into the development of a fresh planning paradigm will be achieved.

1.4 Procedures and methods of analysis

Because of the nature of the research, the approach to this study is qualitative rather than quantitative. Methodologies include: an extensive survey of the literature; telephone and face-to-face interviews with downtown representatives from both public and private sectors; comparative analyses of the benefits of theoretical models of downtown management; commentary and criticism of past and current practices of downtown management.

The use of grid matrices for the comparison of existing downtown management functions, by agency type and for the assessment of functions and jurisdictions of experimental management entities elsewhere in the U.S.A. is applied in Chapters 6 and 9. Quantitative measures of social, fiscal and economic trends are limited to Chapter 2. A limited statistical analysis of the responses to a survey instrument, designed to tap the mood of those most directly affected by

planned change in downtown, was conducted for the purposes of Chapter 8.

1.5 Organization of the study

The principal recommendation of the Downtown Development Strategy submitted to the City of Providence by Carr, Lynch Associates and Melvin Levine and Associates is to establish an implementation and management entity to oversee downtown development. This Master's Research Project will examine in detail alternative theories for addressing short-term urban decline and, in particular, the public and quasi-public agencies selected by diverse American cities in attempting to promote and manage growth. The final chapter of the thesis will attempt to set down concrete policy proposals for the City of Providence as its agencies begin the complex task of reviewing and adopting a new downtown plan.

The structure of this thesis is organized in two sections:

- I. The Carr-Lynch-Levine Strategy: Substantive Issues - This section describes and analyses the work of the consultants, observing their report, first as a self-contained document apart from the milieu of downtown Providence (as an objective piece of research) and, second, to provide a bridge to Section II, the Strategy is critiqued as a prescription for change within the milieu of the city.
- II. Policy and Process Issues: Developing Planning and Management for Downtown Providence, Rhode Island -

The reception of the plan and the search for alternative policies for its implementation are approached from two standpoints. First, from the vantage point of the policy makers as they grapple with the actuality of adopting a fresh approach to downtown and, second, from a personal interpretation of the experiences of other American cities and the development of a hypothetical structure for planning in Providence's core.

SECTION I
THE CARR-LYNCH-LEVINE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:
SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

CHAPTER 2
THE ECONOMY OF DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE:
THE CONTEXTUAL SETTING, EXISTING CONDITIONS
AND THE NEED FOR INTERVENTION

"Downtown Providence today appears to be in a state of suspended animation, just between decline and renewal."

Carr, Lynch Associates, 1986

"Some think I'm too optimistic, but I believe growth in Boston can't help but soon spill over into Providence. I'm betting on a symbiotic relationship between the two cities, and I'm not the only one."

John Ryan, Providence realtor, 1986

"We're on a roll, and this is only the beginning."

Kenneth Orenstein, Executive Director,

Providence Foundation, 1986

2.1 Times have changed

In a recent article in Boston Business Magazine, the author of an article on Rhode Island's capital city substituted the names of Providence's first families for those of the Massachusetts Brahmin, thus:

"Here's to dear old Providence,
Home of johnny cakes and scrod,
Where Metcalfs speak only to Browns
And Browns speak only to God."

It is true that Providence's great philanthropists, cultural figures and educators have commanded greater national attention in recent decades than has its contribution to the regional economy of New England. Indeed, as Caroline Knapp and Peter Kadzis (1986) have noted, "By the late 1950s Providence, like many northeastern cities, had fallen from industrial grace and succumbed to urban grit".

A sustained period of virtually uninterrupted economic growth from 1850 to the immediate post-war years gave way to a seemingly unstoppable period of economic decline. Only in the mid-1980s have politicians found the resolve to tackle Providence's problems head on. In a July, 1983 issue of the Wall Street Journal a front page story denounced Rhode Island as "the region's dowdy neighbor, clinging to old gritty industries and grappling with big economic problems". Nowhere was the impact of this negative image - read about nationally by the nation's most influential investors - felt more strongly than in the city of Providence. Despite the

overwhelming defeat of the Greenhouse Compact (perhaps the only attempt at regional economic planning ever seen in Rhode Island), the stage was set for indignant politicians to sit down together, to bury the disruptive nature of partisan Rhode Island politics, and to contrive to overcome the entrenched pattern of decline in the state's capital city.

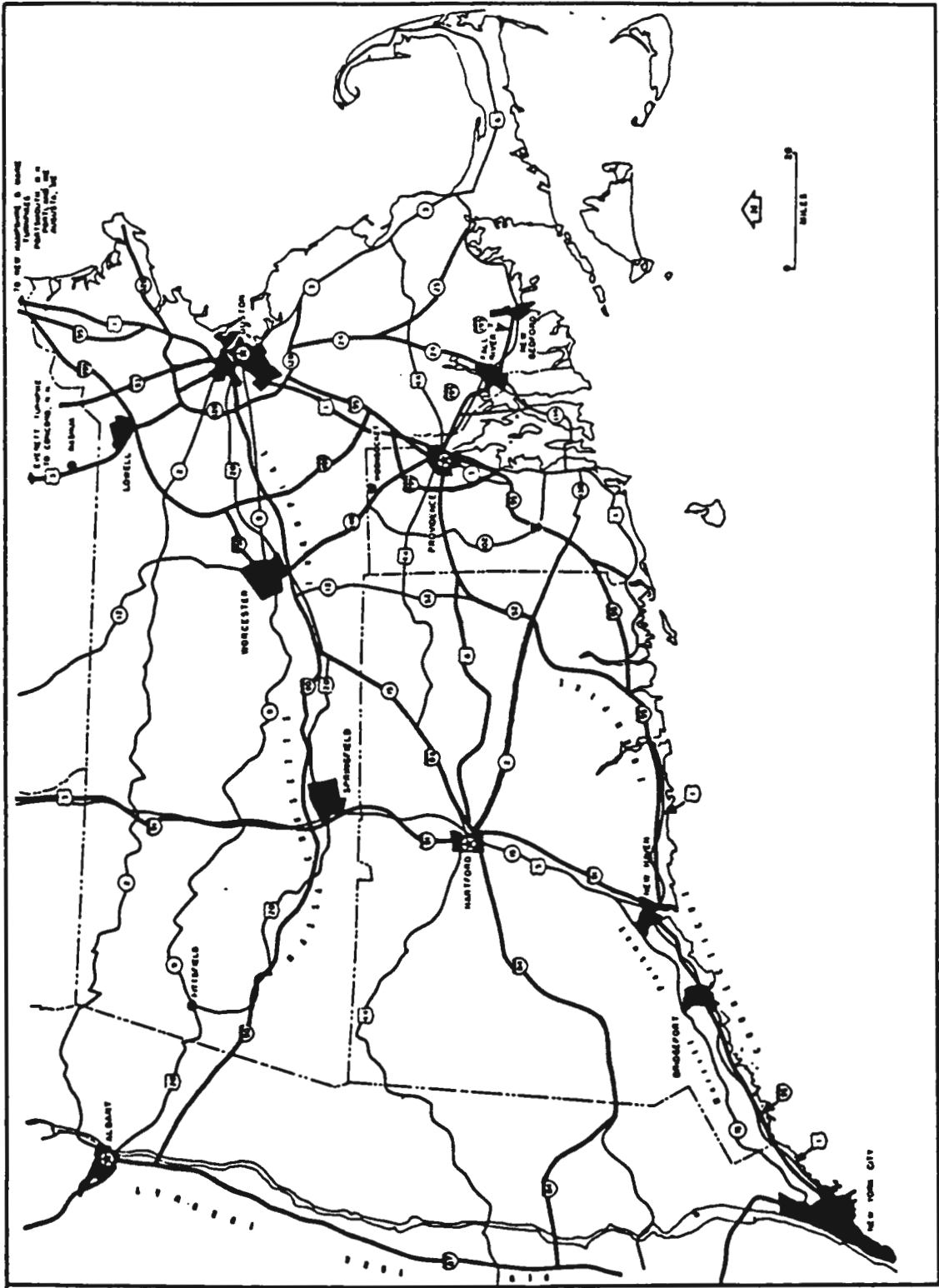
2.2 The regional context

In the Providence Sunday Journal (October 5, 1986), Froma Joselow described New England as the new "Star of the American economy". To understand the contextual setting for economic circumstances in Providence, recent regional events are key. An interim report by the Department of Commerce reported by the Ocean State Business Development Authority in its first Quarterly Report, 1986, states that New England has the nation's lowest unemployment rate (4.1 percent, compared to the national average of 6.7 percent). The average New England worker has a personal income - income from all sources before taxes - of \$15,387, higher than any of the other eight regions. The U.S. average is \$13,451. It appears that the words of John Naissbitt in his much-vaunted work, Megatrends, were far from prophetic: "The North-South shift is irreversible in our lifetime... For economic growth give me Texas, California and Florida, and you can have the other forty-seven". With regard to the shift of population southwards to the Sunbelt, Joselow (1986) notes, "Most of us simply did not go".

New England survived the curse of the negative prophecies, to the surprise of many New Englanders themselves, perhaps because of two essential economic ingredients which were added in 1980. National policies under Ronald Reagan began once more to favor defense oriented industries and the emerging high technology fields. New England, particularly eastern Massachusetts was strong in both. Second, the price of oil ceased to increase and, indeed, began to fall. This stabilized costs for ailing New England industries, while rendering the Sunbelt far less attractive to potential migrants.

But within this rosy regional picture lie pockets of decay which have not benefitted from the positive changes experienced elsewhere. As Jeff Taylor, Director of Community Development in Berlin, New Hampshire recently stated in the Boston Globe (September 8, 1986), "When you lose a job in northern New England, the bus station is a better bet than the local employment office". And within the flourishing economy of southern New England, sandwiched between the success stories of Connecticut and Massachusetts, Rhode Island seems very much the poor relative.

Within southeastern New England, Rhode Island and, in particular, Providence face competition from a number of highly successful regional service centers. Map 2.1 shows the location of the state capital in relation to Boston, Nashua, Springfield, New Haven and New York. All of these cities have shown marked economic recoveries in the first



MAP 2.1
 THE NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL MARKET PLACE

half of this decade. The Bank of Boston's New England Economy (1980-1986) chronicles a widening gap between Rhode Island and the rest of New England. The state's hourly manufacturing wage of \$7.91 is the lowest in the region and the fifth lowest in the nation. The national average is \$9.70 per hour. The difference between Rhode Island and New England manufacturing wages has widened, from 81 cents in 1982 to \$1.02 in the first quarter of 1986. In terms of disposable income - net income after taxes - Rhode Islanders average \$13,620 compared with \$15,200 for the region. This gap has also widened, from \$1,440 in 1984 to \$1,580 in the first quarter of 1986.

Robert Magaziner, one of the pioneering researchers involved in the Greenhouse Compact, noted in an interview with the Providence Journal (October 5, 1986) that in 1984 the number of jobs available in Rhode Island increased only 4 percent, a figure somewhat less than the region's mean figure of 5.6 percent and even the nation's mean of 4.7 percent. For 1985, Magaziner cites Rhode Island Department of Economic Development figures which indicate a worsening situation: employment grew only 1.3 percent against New England's 3.7 percent and the nation's 3.3 percent.

Clearly, a few key employers are sustaining the state's economy. Electric Boat (a subsidiary of General Electric) and Raytheon Corporation together provide some 8,500 jobs, most of which are entirely dependent upon federal defense contracts. Magaziner estimates that should these contracts

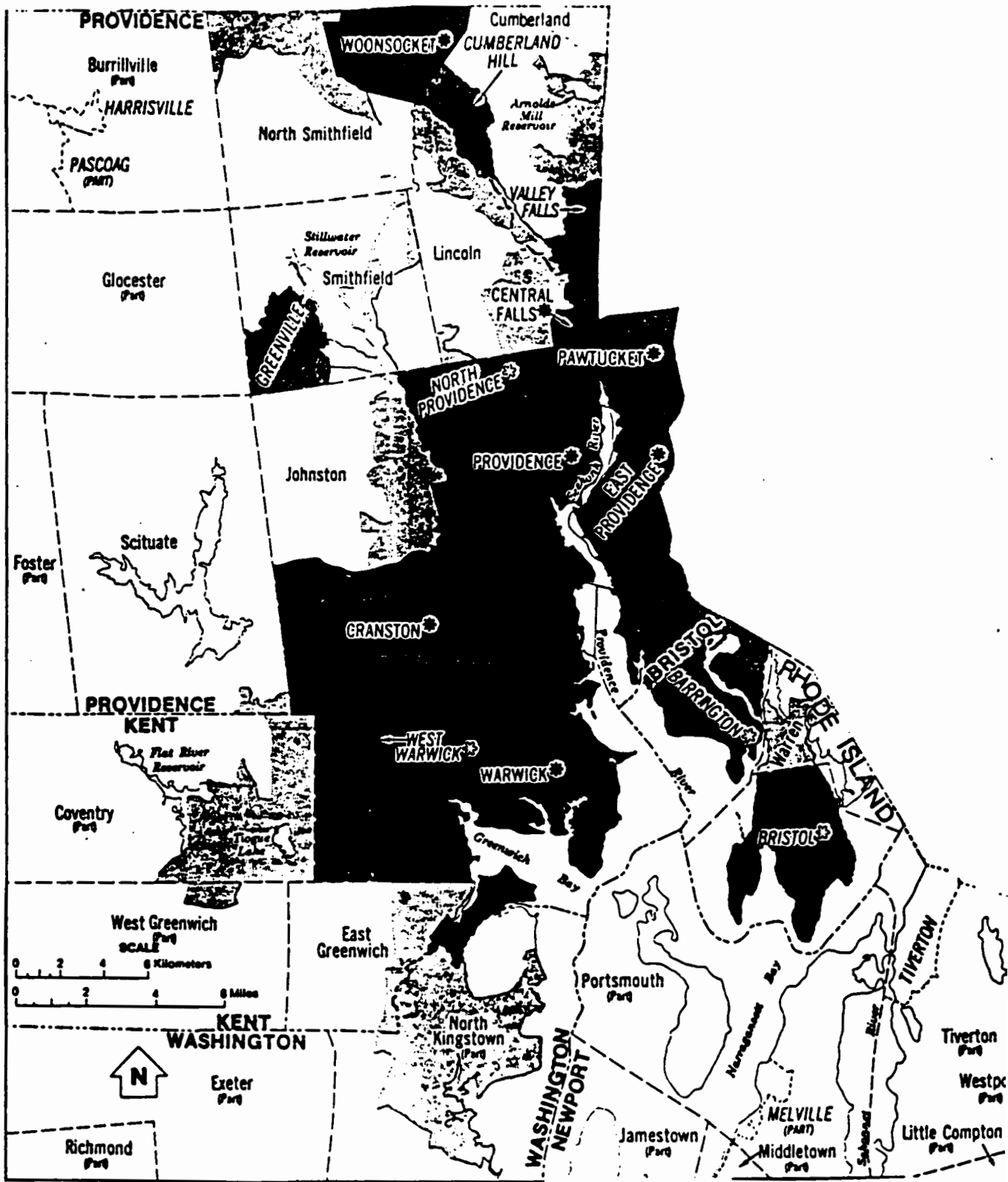
not be renewed at current expenditure levels, the state would rapidly see an increase of one to 1.5 percentage points in its unemployment rate.

To the extent that Rhode Island is holding its own against an entrenched pattern of manufacturing decline, a recent paper by William Jackson (1985) of the Brown University Research Foundation, cited by Knapp and Kadzis (1986), suggests that "Rhode Island is not doing well because of Rhode Island, but because of the run-off from Boston". Steady jobs are increasingly found in the lower paid service sector and are more dependent than ever on the commercial success of corporations headquartered outside the state.

In the editorial section of the latest New England Economy (1986), James Howell of the Bank of Boston notes, "The New England economy is like a West Texas rattlesnake. To survive it has to shed its skin." Nowhere is his warning more applicable than in Providence, Rhode Island.

2.3 A portrait of Providence

At the economic, political and cultural hub of Rhode Island is its capital city, Providence. This urban center of some 156,804 individuals (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980) is located at the head of Narragansett Bay on the Providence River, 43 miles south of Boston and 175 miles northeast of New York. On its borders are the cities of Pawtucket, Cranston and East Providence, and the towns of Johnston and North Providence.



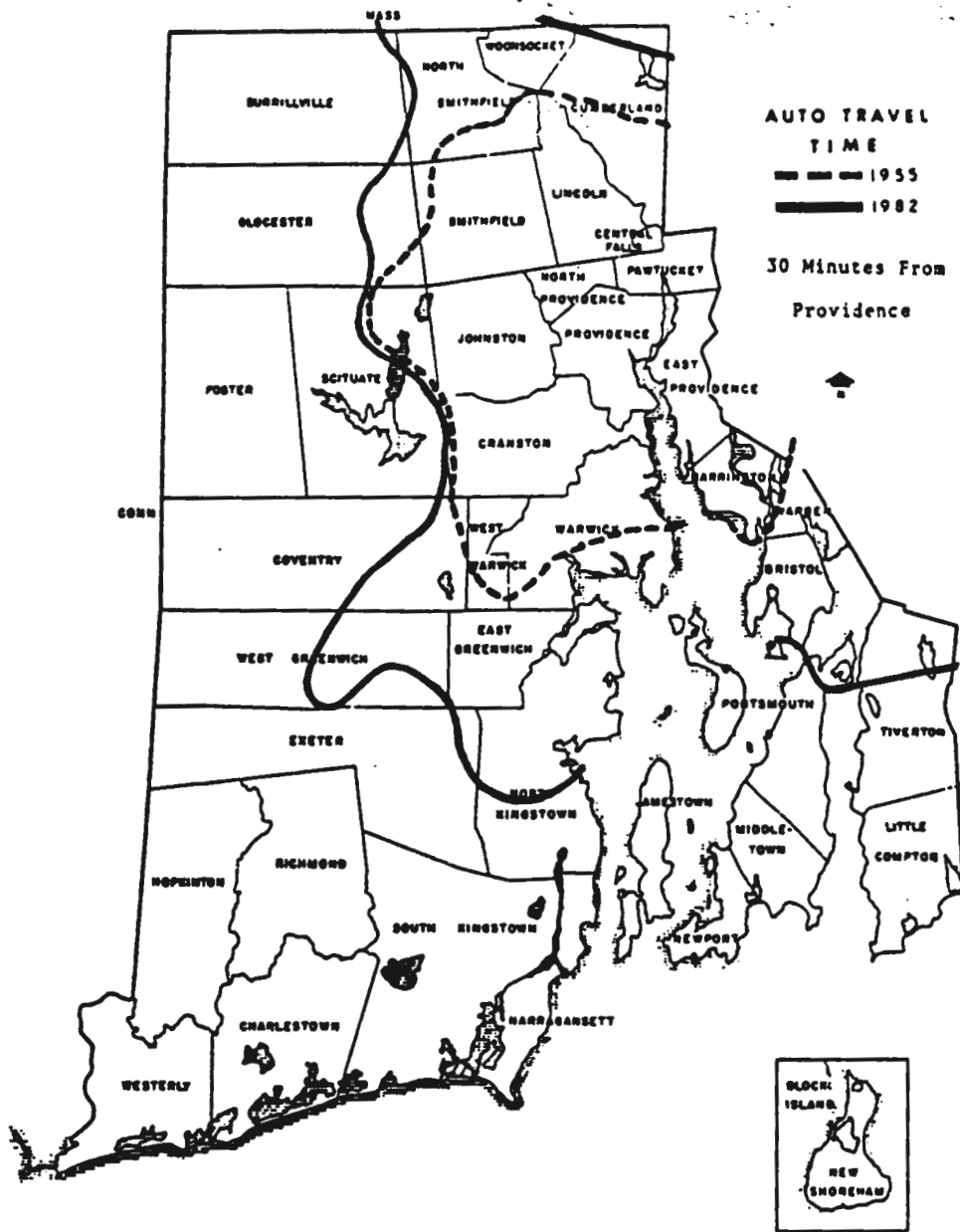
MAP 2.2

THE PROVIDENCE-WARWICK-PAWTUCKET S.M.S.A.

At the heart of the Providence-Warwick-Pawtucket Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (Map 2.2), Providence is theoretically more accessible to Rhode Island residents than at any previous time (Map 2.3). Travel times from peripheral areas to the city have been reduced by up to half an hour (State Department of Transportation figures). However, the upgraded road network has proved to be a double-edged sword; no longer is it necessary to go to Providence. The north-south corridor which incorporates Routes I-295, I-95, 1, 2 and 4 have permitted other metropolitan and suburban communities to grow at unprecedented rates since the mid-1970s. Freed from the legacy of obsolete infrastructures, perceived congestion and abandoned industrial buildings - all of which predominate in Providence's core areas - communities with room to grow have deposed the capital city's role as a regional service center. Warwick, Cranston, Pawtucket and, more recently, East Greenwich and North Kingstown have become major suppliers of goods and services.

- A pattern of residential relocation

Concomitantly, a southwards population shift has occurred. As migrants have decanted from the state's core region, they have settled in urban and suburban communities along major state and interstate routes (Marcia Marker Feld et al, 1985). Table 2.1 shows selected social/demographic indicators demonstrating the effects of out-migration on the city. Total population fell by 12.5 percent from 179,213 in 1970 to 156,804 in 1980 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970,



MAP 2.3
 TRAVEL TIMES TO PROVIDENCE

TABLE 2.1
 SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS
 CITY OF PROVIDENCE
 1970, 1980

	1970	1980	% CHANGE 1970-80
Total Population	179213	156804	-12.5
Median Age	32.1	29.9	-6.9
# 65 years +	26300	24057	-8.5
# < 18 years	48745	36419	-25.3
# Households	62984	60157	-4.5
# Black Households	3587	4200	17.1
# Housing Units	68133	67535	-0.9
Persons/Household	2.69	2.44	-9.3
# Professionals	10677	8707	-18.5
# Clerical	13976	11316	-19.0
# Craftsmen	8908	7834	-12.1
# Operatives	15990	10851	-32.1

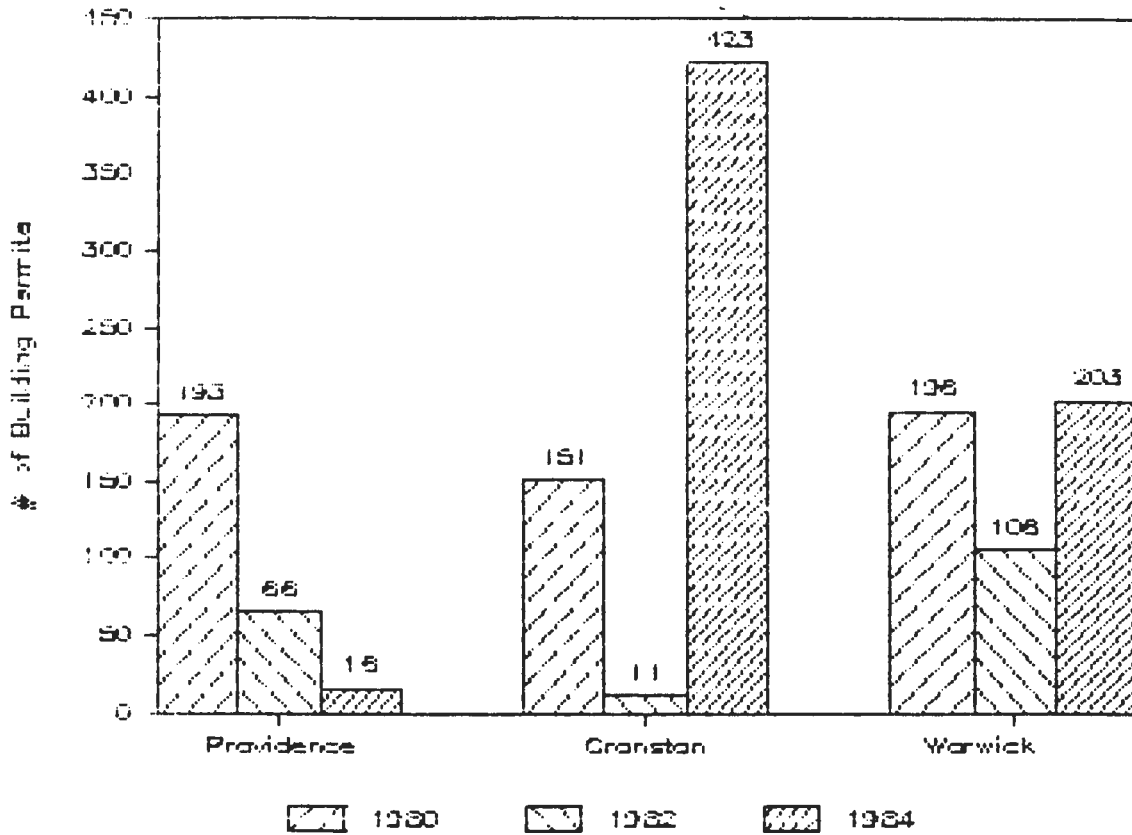
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census,
 1970, 1980

1980). Corresponding declines were witnessed in figures for the total number of households (62,984 to 60,157 in the same period) and the number of both young and elderly citizens (26,300 to 24,057 in the over 65 year cohort, and 48,745 to 36,419 in the under 18 year cohort). The statewide figures for this cohort show an increase in population, from 317,728 in 1970 to 372,672 in 1980, constituting a 17.3 percent increase.

When compared to the picture of residential growth in the surrounding communities of Warwick and Cranston, Providence appears to be losing more ground in the period since the last census was taken. Figures for residential building permits granted in the period 1980 to 1984 demonstrate the continuing decline in neighborhood development in the state capital, with significant growth concentrated in Warwick and Cranston (Figure 2.1). When Providence's residential growth is viewed cumulatively as a share of development in the three communities, it takes only 18 percent of the total (Figure 2.2). Both Warwick and Cranston have grown more impressively, 40 percent and 42 percent, respectively (State Department of Economic Development, 1986). Table 2.2 confirms significant growth in the periphery of the metropolitan region and only marginal growth in the core, while Table 2.3 indicates a net negative impact on the value of property in the capital (median property value of \$38,000) when compared to values in Warwick and Cranston with median values of \$40,700 and \$45,500,

FIGURE 2.1

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS 1980-1984



Source: Rhode Island Basic Economic Statistics, 1985

FIGURE 2.2

SHARE OF INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL PERMITS SINCE 1980

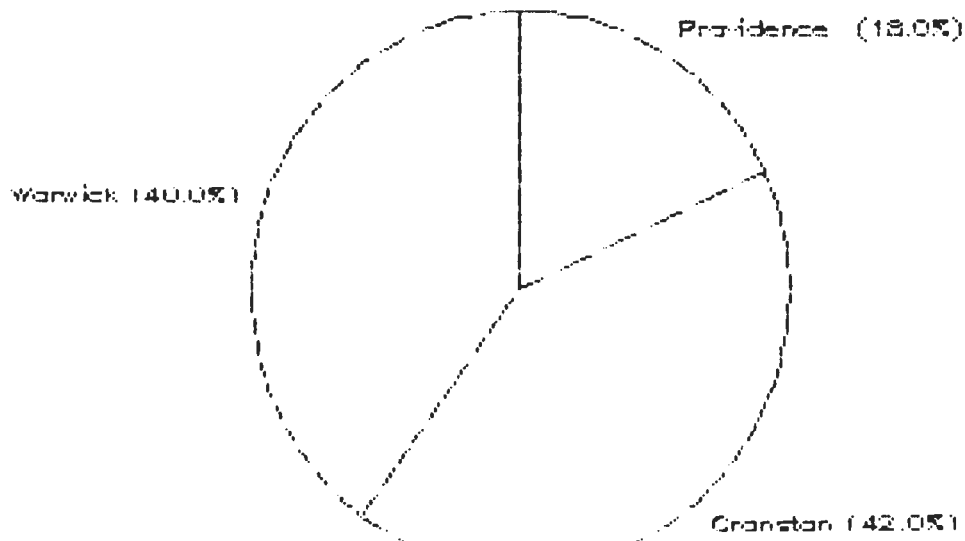


TABLE 2.2
RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS, 1980 - 1984

CITY	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	INCREASE SINCE 1980	TOTAL EXISTING UNITS 1980	% INCREASE SINCE 1980
Providence	193	113	66	197	16	585	67535	0.9%
Cranston	151	333	11	322	423	1340	27280	5.0%
Warwick	196	311	106	456	203	1272	32450	4.0%

Source: Rhode Island Basic Economic Statistics, 1985

TABLE 2.3
GENERAL HOUSING INDICATORS, 1980

City	% Renter Occupied	% Owner Occupied	Median Rent	Median Value
Providence	63.1	36.9	\$139	\$38000
Cranston	32.3	67.7	\$186	\$45500
Warwick	25.0	75.0	\$228	\$40700

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980

respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980).

- **The industrial and commercial experiences**

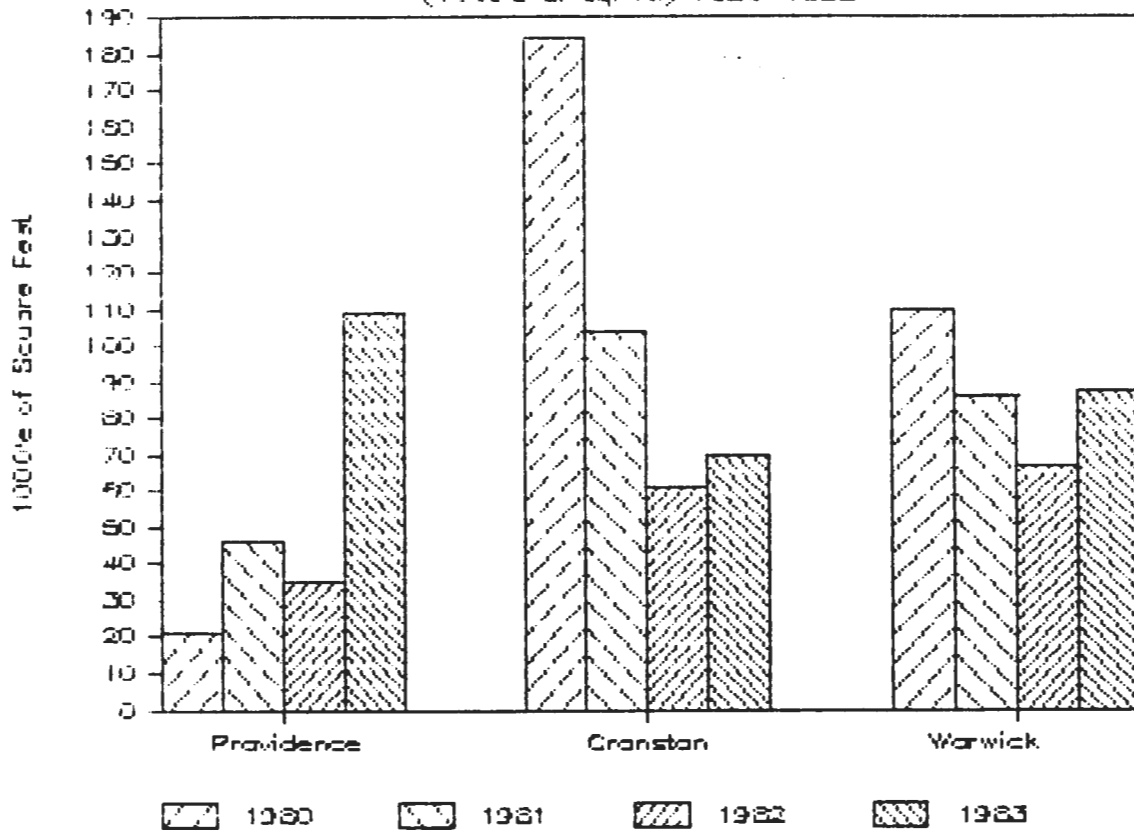
Figure 2.3 indicates that, while Providence is once more managing to recapture a sizeable share of regional manufacturing opportunity, its performance since 1980 has been far from outstanding. Table 2.4 indicates that the city has experienced only approximately one half of the growth in manufacturing space witnessed by Cranston (211,000 square feet of new space in Providence versus 419,000 square feet in Cranston). If these figures are set in the context of total statewide manufacturing construction, Providence has captured only 6.07 percent of all new space, while Cranston has attracted 12.05 percent and Warwick 10.09 percent. The summary table of social/demographic indicators (Table 2.1) is further evidence of the city's inability to foster industrial growth. The labor market for Providence residents no longer supports a strong blue collar manufacturing workforce: the number of employees who found jobs in the Machine Operators and Assemblers census category fell from 15,990 in 1970 to 10,851 in 1980, while in the Precision Production and Crafts census category jobs declined from 8,908 to 7,834 in the same period (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980).

The development of new commercial space within the SMSA indicates that Providence is attracting retail development at a rate which might be expected of a state capital (Table 2.5). Its 21.16 percent share of new commercial development statewide since 1980 would suggest a

FIGURE 2.3

NEW MANUFACTURING CONSTRUCTION

(1000's of sq. ft.) 1980-1983



Source: Rhode Island Basic Economic Statistics, 1985

TABLE 2.4
NEW MANUFACTURING CONSTRUCTION, 1980-1983
1000's of Square Feet of Floor Space by Year

CITY	1980	1981	1982	1983	INCREASE	
					1980-1983	% OF STATE INCREASE (3478)
Providence	21	46	35	109	211	6.07
Cranston	184	104	61	70	419	12.05
Warwick	110	86	67	88	351	10.09

Source: Rhode Island Basic Economic Statistics, 1985

TABLE 2.5
NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION, 1980-1984
Square Feet by Year

CITY	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	INCREASE	
						1980-1984	% OF STATE INCREASE (7116942)
Providence	59446	165165	681526	350000	250000	1506137	21.16
Cranston	53699	185525	70725	137899	104134	551982	7.76
Warwick	182852	124890	101163	354858	378631	142394	16.05

Source: Rhode Island Basic Economic Statistics,
1985

sustained, healthy retail sector. But this is not the case. Table 2.6 clearly demonstrates that Warwick, with 15.9 percent of total state retail sales has surpassed Providence, with 14.4 percent. Indeed, a recent market analysis of Providence's commercial core found that supermarkets and department stores have been supplanted by low order convenience shops and fancy goods establishments. Further, the majority of retail trade is conducted between the hours of noon and 2:00 PM by downtown office workers (Carr, Lynch and Levine, 1986). So where has the real growth in the commercial sector, indicated by the figures in Table 2.5, taken place?

Perhaps the only sector of the citywide economy which has experienced significant growth in recent years (and, incidentally, served to hold up the local economy) is the service sector (Smolski, 1986). Table 2.7 shows the proportion of statewide service industry receipts taken by Rhode Island's three largest cities. Clearly, Providence, with 35.2 percent of the state total and \$466,170,000 in receipts (Rhode Island Department of Economic Development, 1986), has captured the largest share of the service, information, technological, banking, finance, insurance, and consulting industries within the state. The headquarters of state government, state agencies, regional banks and industries choose Providence because of its central location, its provision of communications technology, its infrastructure and the presence of complementary service

TABLE 2.6

RANK BY VOLUME OF RETAIL SALES, 1982

City	State Rank	Sales (\$1000)	% of Total State Sales
Providence	2	\$599787	14.4
Cranston	3	\$299146	7.19
Warwick	1	\$662964	15.9

Source: Rhode Island Basic Economic Statistics, 1985

TABLE 2.7

RANK BY VOLUME OF SERVICE INDUSTRY RECEIPTS, 1982

City	State Rank	Receipt (\$1000)	% of State Receipts
Providence	1	\$466170	35.2
Cranston	4	\$87034	6.44
Warwick	2	\$149061	11.03

Source: Rhode Island Basic Economic Statistics, 1985

uses. In this sense, Providence is truly a state capital and regional service center. But its overdependence on one industrial sector and its perceived low desirability as a residential location and as an environment for sound client-oriented, face-to-face trade have been barriers to balanced economic development (Arthur Markos, interview, August, 1986).

- An unpredictable fiscal future

Table 2.8 summarizes the fiscal experience of the City of Providence during the period 1980 to 1985. In a recent seminar given as part of The University of Rhode Island's 'Professional Guest Lecturer Series' in the graduate planning program (October 8, 1986), Mr. Arthur Markos, Planning Director of the City of Providence, noted some drastic trends in the budget planning of the municipality. In the fiscal years 1980 to 1987, the nationwide federal cuts in urban revenue sharing programs amount to a decline of 71 percent. Of slated social spending cuts in the federal budget for this period, which amount to some \$10,000,000,000, urban programs will account for some \$7,500,000,000. Proposed for either elimination or phased reduction are Urban Development Action Grants, Small Business Administration loans, housing rehabilitation programs, economic development schemes, and, most significantly for Providence, Community Development Block Grants.

Substantial increases in UDAG and CDBG monies made available through programs established in the mid- and late-

TABLE 2.8

FISCAL TRENDS, CITY OF PROVIDENCE, 1980-1985

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Total Revenues	115,680,751	117,545,120	140,051,906	152,508,215	153,726,454	160,482,075
Property Tax	72,401,530	72,326,656	87,514,896	90,303,204	92,784,781	96,489,782
% Residential	42.3	42.0	41.4	40.0	39.6	38.8
% Commercial	29.3	30.1	31.1	31.2	32.5	32.6
% Industrial	9.8	9.1	8.3	7.7	7.5	8.6
% Other	18.6	18.8	19.2	21.1	20.4	20.0
State Aid	22,987,193	24,196,290	30,804,180	35,781,729	44,875,327	47,769,449
State School Aid	785,000	847,000	1,072,000	1,235,000	1,525,000	1,675,000
Federal Aid	440,991	113,077	148,870	5,715,106	5,230,132	5,269,753
Fed. School Aid	68,000	47,000	67,000	65,000	36,000	32,000

Source: Rhode Island Department of Community Affairs,
1980-1985

1970s began to decline from a high point of federal revenue sharing in 1983, when Providence received \$5,715,106 in direct federal aid (Table 2.8). The City Administration anticipates gradual decreases in federal monies for the immediate future. Revaluation of properties for the purpose of the property tax levy is currently in the research phase, but neither this nor incremental increases in state aid will buffer the anticipated loss in federal cuts (Arthur Markos, guest lecturer, The University of Rhode Island, 1986). Mayors have been consistently reluctant to increase local taxes; local terms of office are for four years and such increases would not be 'psychologically' absorbed by the electorate before the next elections.

The single largest subsidy proffered by the City is in the area of public education. Table 2.8 clearly demonstrates the shift in external assistance. As federal aid has contracted in this decade, so the state has been forced to intervene with significant annual increases in fiscal support, from \$785,000 in 1980 to \$1,675,000 in 1985. Indeed, it was limited fiscal resources - in the face of self-perpetuating urban problems - that brought back into the spotlight the pressing issues associated with downtown Providence.

2.4 The ripeness of a specifically 'downtown' plan

It was doubts about the availability of funds for innovative future planning, not only in education but across

the broad spectrum of public sector policy making, that brought the focus of Mayor Joseph R. Paolino, Jr. and the senior staff at the Department of Planning and Development to bear upon the issue of breathing new life into downtown Providence. Acutely aware of the social, economic and fiscal trends outlined in this chapter, the Administration realized that the city core was not recovering from years of decline and recession in the manner of Cranston, Warwick and other Rhode Island central places. Fears about the implications of continuing decline, coupled with an awareness of the potential benefits to be derived from tapping the positive residual effects of the booming Boston regional economy, led to a fresh perspective on the value of downtown as a catalyst for change. Already, by 1985, there were plans for the Capital Center Project, a public-private partnership of unprecedented scale geared toward revitalizing 60 acres in the State Capitol Building area of downtown. Likewise, the Plan for the Providence Waterfront was in the early stages of implementation, based upon the designs of William Warner, the consulting architect. But what of the old downtown, the historic core, the financial and retail district? Prevailing conditions both in terms of the physical fabric and the delicate economic position demanded closer attention.

As the consultants who were selected to conduct the study for downtown were quick to point out, missing the boat this time might destroy the chances of recovery forever. Chester Smolski, Director of Urban Studies at Rhode Island

College wrote in a recent article (1986), of the time being "right" for a fresh approach to downtown planning. Paolino himself caught the tide of renewed optimism for the center of the city when he delivered his Second Annual State of the City Address (January, 1986): "There is a new and exciting feeling when you mention Providence. It is a feeling that comes from the changes we have made and from experiencing the sheer beauty and magnificence of a city coming back to life."

Later in his speech, a note of realism and caution set in: "Still, there is much work to be done before our downtown truly becomes a centerpiece for the neighborhoods..." Here, then, is the context for a fresh analysis of the plight of downtown Providence. Paolino, ever careful not to overemphasize the central city for fear of offending the neighborhoods (in which the voters dwell), but all the while conscious of his vested realty interests in the urban core (the Paolino family owns and manages substantial commercial holdings in the historic core district), acknowledged that public policy would once more dwell seriously on downtown: "A comprehensive downtown strategy will be completed this year. I am asking the Director of Planning and Development to make recommendations based on that strategy and report them to me by spring..."

As things transpired, however, the planning and policy environment changed; the re-emphasis of downtown in city planning was to be held back until after the elections. Influential members of the Greater Providence Chamber of

Commerce advised Paolino privately not to push the plan too hard before the November, 1986 elections. But in the interim period, May through October, an orchestrated campaign of further research and analysis, public consultation, policy generation and strategy modification was conducted. Under the aegis of Department Director, Arthur Markos, a team of city staffers and downtown professionals from both public and private sectors began to hammer out the form and substance of future planning - its substance, funding and management - in downtown Providence.

2.5 A portrait of downtown

An assessment of the picture of Providence's core which presents itself to the planner in 1986, shows elements both positive and negative. Visually, downtown is a microcosm of the intensive and diverse land uses of the archetypal American central city. During the daytime, corporate bankers rub shoulders with high school gangs. At night, a cosmopolitan, but low profile, mix of theater goers and chic restaurant patrons stroll nonchalantly past a more visible hotchpotch of homosexual bar cliques, shabby street folk, drug addicts and drunks. On one side of Dorrance Street, in a clearly delineated zone stretching to the river, are the skyscrapers in which the Fleet National and Rhode Island Hospital Trust banks are located. On the other, encompassing the blocks up to Empire Street, are shabby stores, underutilized office buildings, bars, tabacconists and dingy

drug stores. Depending on the extent of his idealism, a planner's dream - or his nightmare. And adding grist to his mill or sense of purpose, is the knowledge that things were not always this way, and need not be so today. Armed with their batch of descriptive statistics could not the city planners find an appropriate strategy for change? Clearly, the Mayor and his planning director thought that they could. For the moment, though, the descriptive statistics.

- The changing profile of downtown residents

Table 2.9 presents a summary of demographic and employment indicators for census tract 08, Downtown Providence (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970, 1980). The areal delineation of downtown, for the purposes of this analysis, corresponds to census tract 08 as defined by Map 2.4.

While the total population of Providence has declined over the past decade, downtown has experienced a 32 percent increase from 1,560 individuals in 1970 to 2,045 in 1980. Concomitantly, a 38 percent increase in the number of housing units was witnessed in the same period (from 885 to 1,223), as was an increase in dwelling density which rose from 2.86 units per acre in 1970 to 3.96 units per acre in 1980. Much of this increase is attributable to two large scale tower block developments aimed at the elderly. The pre-existing housing stock is occupied by a broad cross-section of Providence citizens, but a notable change in the demographic composition has occurred since 1970. The number of

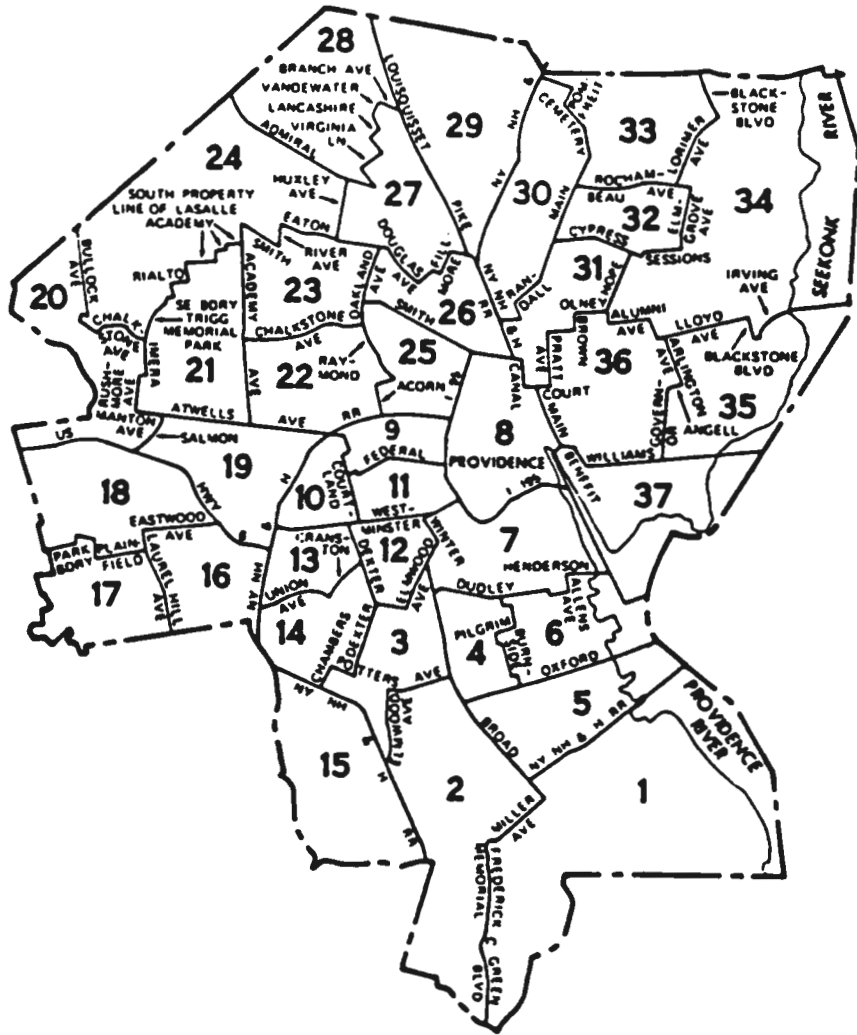
TABLE 2.9
 SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS
 DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE
 1970, 1980

	1970	1980	% CHANGE 1970-80
Total Population	1560	2045	32.0
Population/Acre	5.05	6.62	31.1
# Housing Units	885	1223	38.2
# Units/Acre	2.86	3.96	38.5
# White Households	1449	1803	24.4
# Black Households	84	162	92.9
# Male (Married)	265	201	-24.2
# Male (Single)	332	471	41.9
# Female (Married)	236	187	-20.8
# Female (Single)	231	481	108.2
# in High School	8	5	-37.5
# Lived in Same House for 5 yrs	506	746	47.4
% Male Unemployed	1.5	8	433.3
% Fem. Unemployed	2.6	9.3	257.7
# Professionals	113	198	75.2
# in Manufacturing	130	134	3.1
# in F.I.R.E.	30	148	393.3
% Families < Poverty Level	12.5	2.8	-77.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census,
 1970, 1980

MAP 2.4

PROVIDENCE, CENSUS TRACTS



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970, 1980

professional job-holders increased by 98 percent, 1970 to 1980. The number of manufacturing employees increased by only 3.1 percent. Those employed in the Finance, Insurance and Real Estate census category increased by 393 percent (Table 2.9).

Clearly, there has been a shift toward those individuals employed in the burgeoning downtown service industries and, conversely, an expected decline in those inner city residents who once found work in the city's manufacturing sector. This hypothesis is reinforced by Melvin Levine's market analysis for upmarket residential dwellings conducted in the Downtown Development Strategy (discussed in Chapter 4). Young professional singles and couples, the 'Yuppies', are appearing on the downtown scene, taking apartments on the lower East Side and attics in the historic core.

- The local economy and the pattern of land use

Steve Carr, one of the consultants who presented the Downtown Strategy before a public forum at City Hall in July, 1986, opened his talk with the words, "Downtown Providence today appears to be in a state of suspended animation, just between decline and renewal..." His words aptly summarize the state of flux evidenced by the downtown economy. The existing office, retail and housing sectors are all lagging behind their full potential. But, while Corliss Landing and South Main Street (encompassed by the Waterfront District Plan) and the area between the old railroad tracks and the State Capitol Building (overseen by the Capital Center

Commission) already have detailed plans for revitalization and economic development, the historic core - where the bulk of existing downtown offices and shops are located - has received little attention. Within a clearly defined study area (Map 2.5), agreed upon by the City and its special consultants, these negative economic trends appear to be most acute and demanding of unique policy solutions.

What remains of Providence's historic downtown core may, however, prove to be fundamental to growth. Indeed Providence, like Boston, is fortunate that its core area did not witness the blasphemous wholesale clearance in the 1960s and 1970s when the value of older buildings was not fully appreciated. The current legacy of fine Victorian buildings is an asset to attempts to promote downtown location of a variety of commercial uses.

While the buildings have largely been retained, the activities which once inhabited them have gone through a period of sharp decline, only recently to have been countered by gradual resurgence. As retail businesses moved to suburban and fringe metropolitan locations, such as Cranston and Warwick, downtown began to empty out and to lose its identity as the single 'multi-purpose' center of the Rhode Island urban region. To the extent that there has been resurgence, it has been concentrated in those segments of the service sector which command a broad sphere of influence and a regionally based market. Business, high order services and government agencies predominate.



MAP 2.5

THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY STUDY AREA

New highrise office structures have changed the old skyline around Kennedy Plaza. Empire Street and Lasalle Square provide recent contributions to the inventory of Class 'A' Office Space (office spaces commanding a per square foot rent in excess of \$15.00). This is, however, relatively little development for a city the size of Providence, while residual development appears to be taking place primarily by upgrading from within via rehabilitation projects. The market, therefore, appears still to be somewhat slack; even a number of the attractive spaces in the Fleet, Old Stone and Hospital Trust buildings remain vacant.

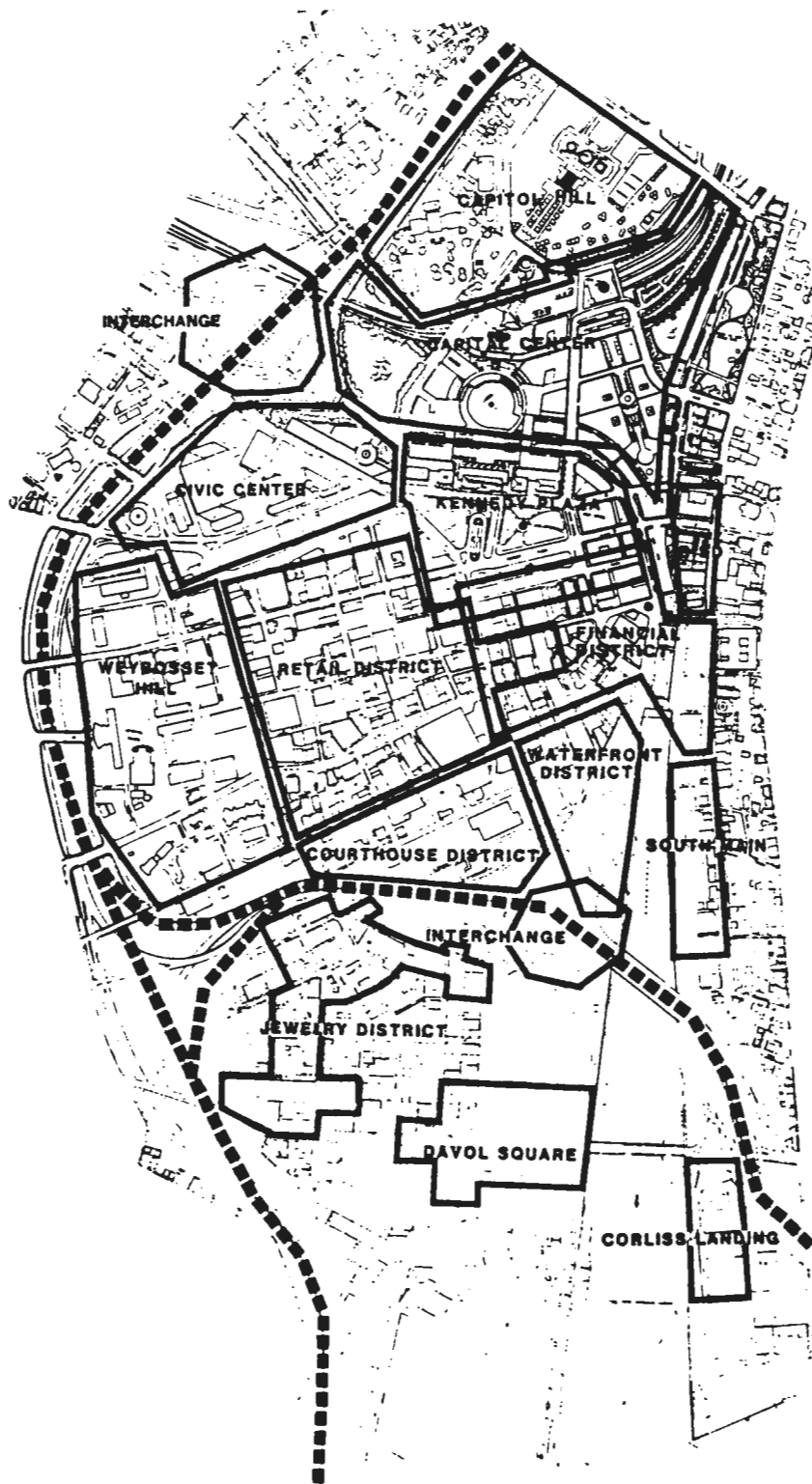
This slow rate of current development can be attributed, for the most part, to dynamic growth in the more desirable locations of Boston, Hartford, Stanford and suburban New York. The nearby Boston metropolitan area, with its established commercial ribbon developments along Routes 128 and 495, has probably constituted a severe constraint to growth in Providence. The key to a new downtown planning strategy is to tap into Boston's good fortune and to reap the unquestionable advantages Providence has to offer, particularly in respect to rents, congestion, accessibility, grade level public education, open space and all round livability.

- Downtown districts

For the purposes of inventorying development opportunity sites, geared to ameliorating the unyielding economic climate, downtown can be subdivided into a number of

districts, each with its own characteristics and problems. Map 2.6 shows the following subsections of downtown: Kennedy Plaza - in the northeast corner of the area, the plaza was recently reconstructed as the central terminal for Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority's bus operation; the Financial District - a striking collection of older office buildings in the center of which is located the struggling Arcade retail complex; the Providence Waterfront - including the newly designated Waterfront District, South Main Street and the RISD area; the Courthouse District - an area of marginal uses including parking garages and warehouses; Weybosset Hill - containing evidence of recent renewal and the fire-gutted Outlet Building; the Retail District - bordered by Washington, Westminster and Weybosset Streets, containing an uneasy mix of abandoned lots cleared for parking, Westminster Mall, drug stores, bars and run-down office structures; the Capital Center Project Area - 60 acres of prime development land; the Jewelry District - a blend of four- to six-story brick manufacturing buildings and dilapidated offices; and, finally, Davol Square - the large scale private retail and office development yet to find a wholly adequate slot in the regional marketplace.

Naturally, the pattern of decline has had different impacts on each of these areas. While concentrating primarily on the historic core (bounded by Dorrance, Empire, Fountain and Weybosset), the consultants were asked by the City to look to the issues affecting the wider downtown



MAP 2.6

DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

environment. Whether or not they proceeded to do so is the subject of Chapter 4. Whether or not what they selected to study was convincingly thorough is the subject of Chapter 5.

2.6 Evidence enough to demand a new strategy

With the benefits of intimacy conferred by local professional knowledge, the senior planning staff in Paolino's Administration were quite aware of the areal disparities across the city and increasingly aware of the district-to-district disparities which existed within downtown itself. Persuading the Mayor to adopt an active stance toward economic development was not a difficult task. The hiring of appropriate consultants and the setting of goals were different matters altogether.

CHAPTER 3
PLAN OF ATTACK: THE CONSULTANTS
AND THEIR METHODOLOGY

"We have to make a fundamental decision. First, what is it we actually want to achieve? We have to make sure that we know what our objective is and that we then select the means that are appropriate to that objective."

Henry Kissinger,
Former U.S. Secretary of State,
on Nicaragua, 1984

3.1 The need for consultants and a fresh approach

The most cursory review of plans for downtown Providence since the early 1960s reveals a sad trend in local city planning. While, in every case, the presentation of contemporary social and economic environments is unquestionably thorough, only the vaguest hints at policy recommendations and methods of implementation are ventured.

At present, under the experienced eye of Ms. Charlene Hall, former aide to Mayor Vincent Cianci and current Executive Director of the Capital Center Commission, the much publicized Capital Center Project is overseeing the removal of obsolete AMTRAK lines and the installation of a new urban infrastructure. This section of downtown, with its admirably comprehensive design review regulations, is already taken care of in terms of coordinated planning. Likewise, those areas on the immediate waterfront are incorporated into a new Waterfront District with designs already submitted and approved along the lines proposed by chief consulting architect, Mr. William Warner.

For the reasons detailed in the previous chapter, both the oversights of the past and the ripeness of the current regional economic situation, begged a focus upon the long suffering historic core districts. An immediate decision was made by the Administration not to undertake the task of undertaking a development strategy 'in house'. The city's Director of Planning and Development is always first to acknowledge the lack of planning expertise among his regular

staff. The only qualified urban planner in the Department, Ms. Kathleen Field, finds herself occupied with the routine of day-to-day planning matters. Her commitment to long range planning is currently limited to updating land use maps and ordinance changes for neighborhood zoning, in association with her assistant Soo Dip Chin.

Given the lack of technical ability in the pool of department staff, yet armed with well defined concepts with regard to the policy direction of the proposed strategy, Mayor Paolino and Arthur Markos decided to recruit the assistance of well qualified, highly experienced consultants. With a proposed budget in excess of \$75,000 the Administration believed that soundly researched proposals would be forthcoming within a politically acceptable time frame.

The selection of Carr, Lynch Associates in conjunction with Melvin Levine and Associates was based upon their satisfaction of a number of key criteria. First, the background of Steve Carr in downtown urban design projects and the professional market analysis work of Melvin Levine in association with the Rouse Corporation, commended their collaboration in a study for Providence which would demand the skills of both designer and economist. Second, the objectivity of a firm with no prior professional knowledge of the circumstances of downtown would ensure recommendations free from political contamination. All concerned parties were acutely aware of the city's, albeit unjust, reputation

for nepotism and bias in its exercise of policy implementation. Third, the small size of both Carr's and Levine's firms ensured the personal involvement of the characters interviewed. While research assistants would be employed in the gathering of data, plan and policy derivation would be handled by the key professionals hired. Subsequent relations between the Administration and the consulting consortium would be limited to meetings between the Mayor, his planning department Director, senior department staff, Steve Carr and Melvin Levine.

3.2 Broad brush strokes: what did the City want?

Given the existing conditions of downtown and the areal disparities within the core noted in Chapter 2 of this Research Project, the natural concentration of effort was envisaged to fall upon the historic core (as defined by Map 2.6). The Administration drew the consultants' attention to the following issues and concerns:

1. The vacancy rates existing in both Class 'A' and Class 'B' spaces.
2. Trends among development interests leading to proposed high quality, condominium type residential units.
3. Poor physical infrastructure and streetscapes in the retail district.
4. The limited demand for rehabilitated properties.
5. The inadequacy of downtown as a citywide retail center.
6. Westminster Mall's poor visibility to shoppers.

7. The absence of coordinated marketing and management for the downtown area.
8. Traffic congestion, parking problems and the layout of the existing ring road system.
9. Physical linkages and accessibility between Capital Center, the Waterfront District, the Court House District and Davol Square.
10. The absence of downtown attractions and facilities for potential evening and weekend visitors or tourists.

A broad summary of goals was furnished to support the Carr-Lynch-Levine research. Economic development issues were seen as paramount. Second, were the management and marketing of downtown as a unique neighborhood in which to live and conduct business. Third, were the desirable objectives of improved urban design and upgraded physical fabric.

3.3 Study parameters set by the consultants

As described, common ground was found between the Administration and Carr-Lynch-Levine in establishing a mapped study area (Map. 2.6). Briefly, this area focuses on those blocks between Empire and Dorrance, Fountain and Pine Streets - essentially the old retail core - since that was the area identified as being in greatest need of attention. For the purposes of integrating surrounding areas into long term goals, the study team also considered the districts associated with Capital Center, Kennedy Plaza, Union Station, Dyer Street (the waterfront) and the Jewelry District.

The consultants proceeded to establish a statement of purpose, a series of goals and a methodology of data collection tailored to the downtown study.

The overall purpose of the Development Strategy was to make Providence "a better place in which to work, to do business, to live and enjoy life" (Carr-Lynch-Levine, 1986). Commensurate with the wishes of the Administration, the statement of purpose in the strategy was refined to achieve the following by the year 2000:

1. Attract new office growth first to locations within the historic core, to provide direct support for residential and retail development.
2. Develop a downtown residential community large enough to create a positive evening and weekend presence on the streets, as well as an active group to advocate continued improvement.
3. Restore downtown retail to its full potential based on office workers, and create a realistic increase in evening and weekend business based on city and suburban residents and visitors.
4. Create a set of new attractions, complementing those already in downtown, in order to increase evening and weekend activity.
5. Create a management function capable of promoting the continued growth and well-being of the area.
6. Revive the Westminster Mall as the central spine of downtown activity and as a street of pride for the

people of Providence.

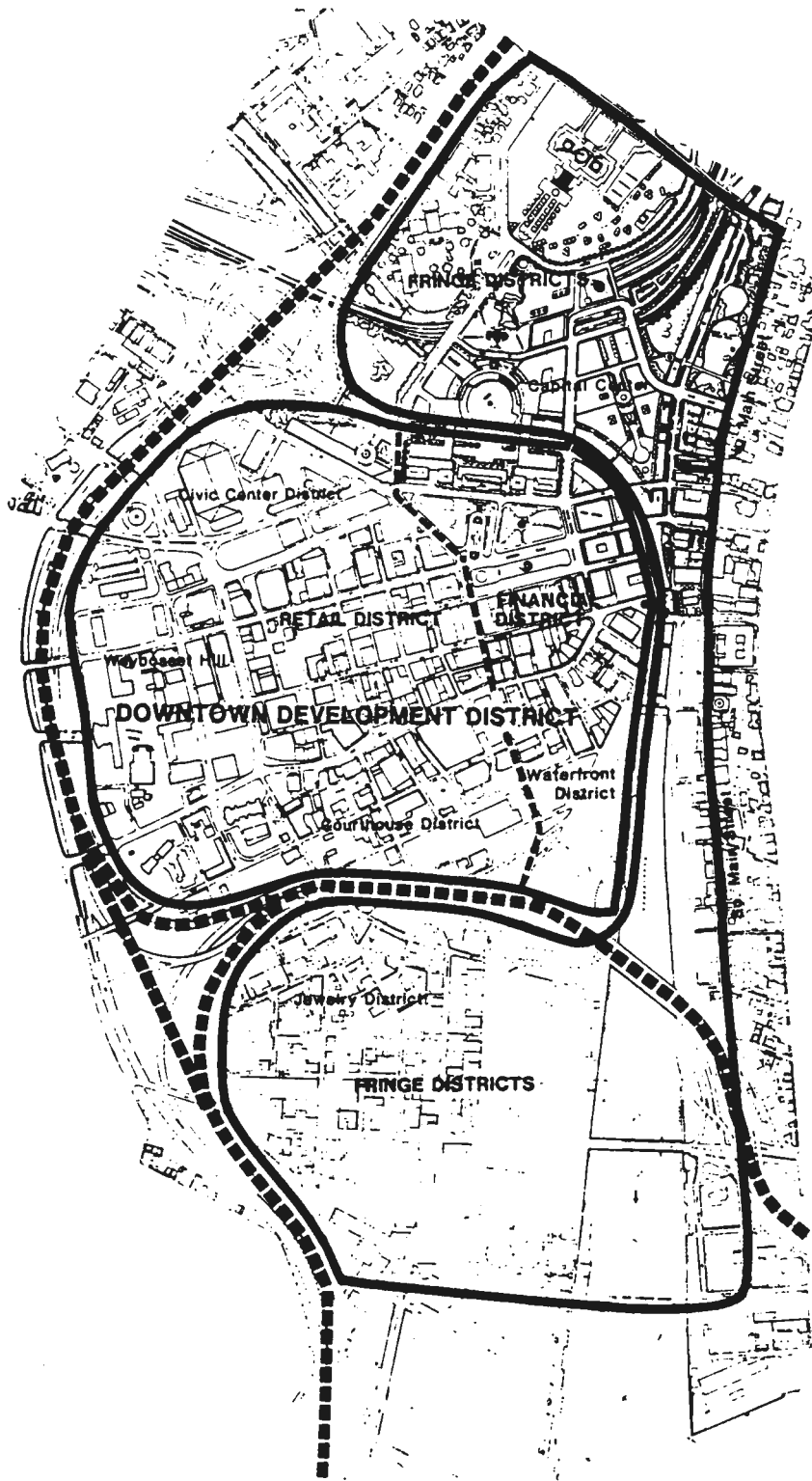
7. Facilitate the re-creation of a mixed use downtown waterfront between Dyer Street and the Providence River.
8. Improve and reinforce the downtown ring roads for parking access, and provide publicly assisted structured parking adequate to support the projected housing and office growth.

The three broad goals specified for the downtown development effort were:

1. To stimulate the development and occupancy of office space to accommodate the growth of existing firms and the needs of new firms attracted to Providence.
2. To encourage the development of housing in rehabilitated structures, where appropriate, to accommodate the strong latent demand for housing in the downtown area.
3. To encourage the expansion and sound merchandising of the retail/restaurant/service space in the downtown retail district and financial district to accommodate increases in downtown shopping by area residents attracted by celebrations, events and festivals arranged around a network of attractions.

3.4 The consultants' methodology

Most of the consultants' recommendations were based upon a commendably thorough data base inventory pertaining to a carefully selected zone within the study area: the Downtown Development District (Map 3.1). Data was also collected,



DOWNTOWN PLANNING DISTRICTS

MAP 3.1

DOWNTOWN PLANNING DISTRICTS

though less comprehensively, for Fringe Districts within the study area (Map 3.1). Recommendations in the Carr-Lynch-Levine Development Strategy apply most directly, therefore, to the Downtown Development District.

The collection of primary and secondary data for assembly in the published data base was conducted in two ways: first, a review of secondary social, demographic, and economic data, as well as an analysis of past land use and policy plans; second, the execution of two primary data collection exercises - a downtown land use inventory and a market analysis which included a downtown employee survey.

A descriptive analysis of the consultants' findings is presented in the following chapter. A review and critique of the report are made in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4
PROPOSALS FOR ADDRESSING DECLINE:
A SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS OF
THE CARR-LYNCH-LEVINE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

"The key components of the strategy will be financial and institutional inventions. The superstructure for a vital, successful downtown is mostly there. With aggressive management it can be filled with renewed activity."

Carr-Lynch-Levine, 1986

"My vision of a new residential neighborhood in the heart of downtown can be a reality"

Mayor Joseph R. Paolino, Jr., 1986

4.1 Structure of the report

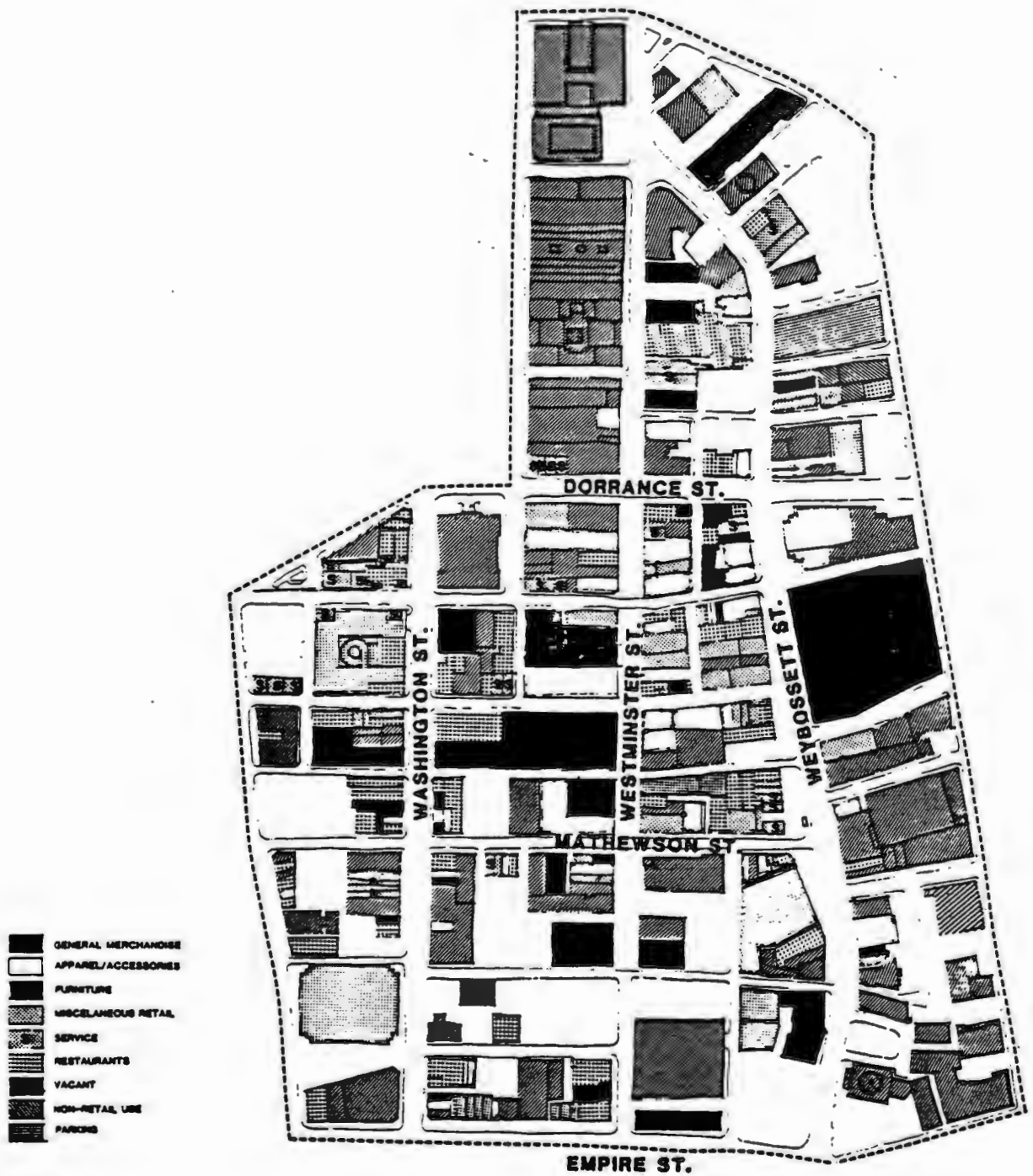
Consisting of 161 pages, the Providence Downtown Development Strategy is divided into eight chapters and three appendices. Following the logical succession of planning research methodology, an assessment is given of existing conditions and then, after a summary of the proposed 'Overall Development Strategy', recommendations are submitted for retail development, housing development and an attractions strategy. The final chapter gives a future scenario of 'The Future Downtown', detailing the expected physical, social and economic outcomes of the policy recommendations. The appendices summarize the methodology and results of the market analysis and employment survey, as well as provide acknowledgements to study participants and advisors.

4.2 Major elements of the Development Strategy

Before analyzing implementational aspects of the Strategy in respect to planning, funding and management, the elements of the Carr-Lynch-Levine report, by functional area, are briefly summarized. Page numbers in this and the following chapter are cited to correspond with the Strategy as presented to the City of Providence in March, 1986. For the better orientation of the reader, the consultants' graphics for existing and proposed land uses in the historic core are furnished (Maps 4.1 and 4.2).

- Retail development

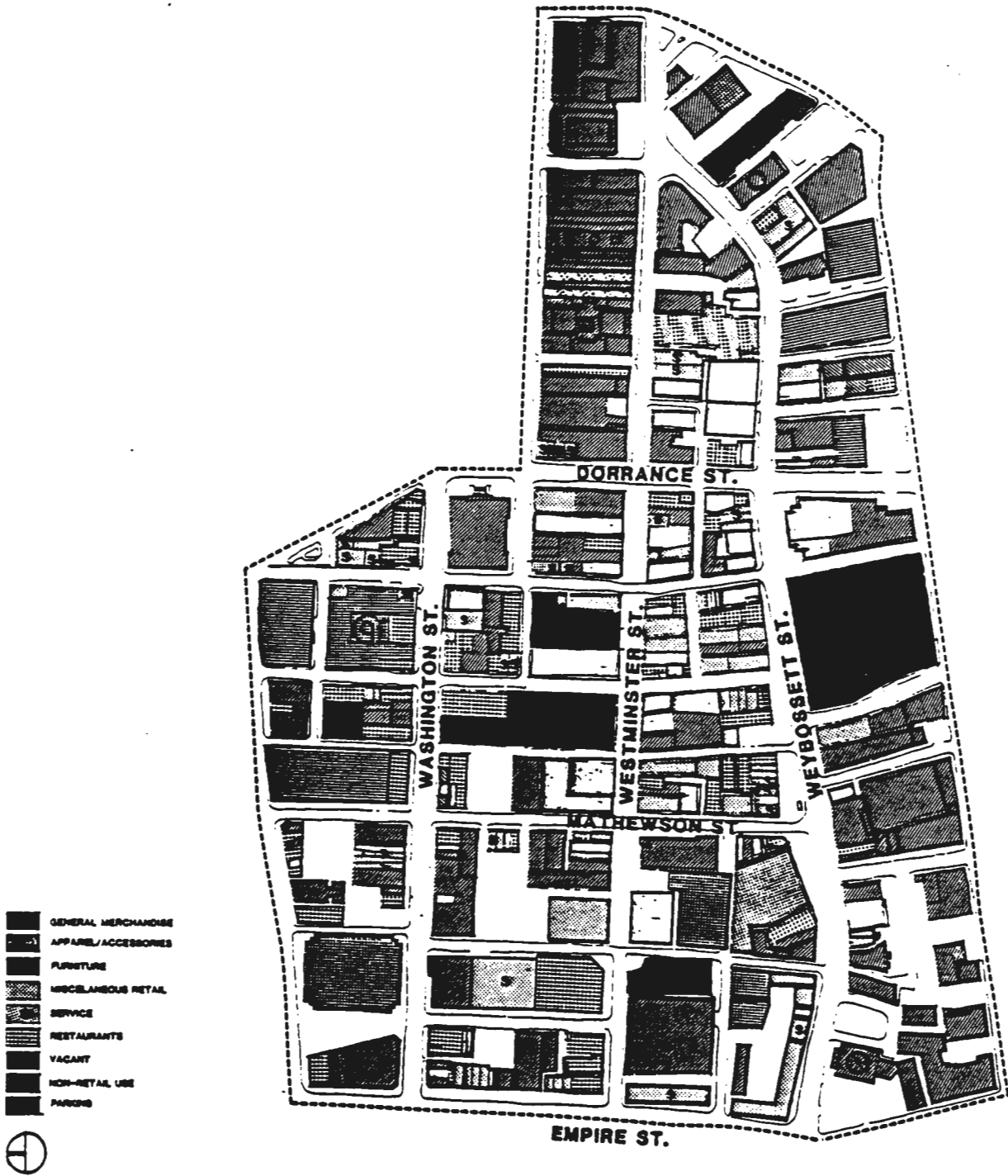
The historic core contains 238,000 square feet of



LAND USE SHOWN AS OF
NOVEMBER 1985

MAP 4.1

RETAIL DISTRICT - EXISTING GROUND FLOOR LAND USE



MAP 4.2

RETAIL DISTRICT - PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR LAND USE

shoppers' goods stores (including apparel, furniture and miscellaneous retail), as well as 210,000 square feet of convenience stores and services (including eating and drinking places). The shoppers' goods stores are focussed on Westminster and Weybosset Streets, between Dorrance and Mathewson. Most of the full service restaurants are located on or within a block of Washington Street, between Dorrance and Mathewson. The consultants found that shoppers' goods stores and the restaurants combined derive 70 to 80 percent of their sales from downtown employees (Market Analysis, Appendix 1, p.133).

There are no department stores remaining in the downtown area. Department stores typically attract about half of all dollars expended in downtown retail establishments (Melvin Levine, 1986). The addition of a department store or a collection of associated stores in a department store-like development (similar to that proposed for the recently fire damaged Outlet Building), was seen by the consultants as constituting a "quantum-step increase in expenditures by downtown employees and in shopping trips to downtown by city and suburban residents."

The retail development strategy calls for the type of management to be found in suburban shopping malls. Based upon the land use inventory and the employee survey, essential components for retail success were established as:

1. An upscale department store.
2. More apparel stores.

3. An attractive, secure and well-maintained Westminster Mall.
4. Improved parking.
5. More attractions downtown on weekends for area residents and visitors.

The tasks of the agency to be charged with executing the Strategy, in respect to retail growth, can be summarized as follows:

1. Work with owners of vacant stores and of stores at key locations to bring in first class apparel and specialty stores with a view to strengthening retail links between the Arcade and Dorrance Street and along both Westminster and Weybosset Streets.
2. Direct the conversion of Westminster Mall to a festival place with improved pavement, lighting, signs, awnings, and exhibit/performing places.
3. Work with restaurant owners along Washington Street to make their operations more inviting to patrons.
4. Work with retail, restaurant and entertainment facility managers to create a parking validation system that essentially would offer free parking to clients in the evenings and at weekends.
5. Work with retail store managers and property owners to create an operations manual for the Downtown Retail District. Create and seek the adoption of a model retail lease for future retail tenants that would embody the provisions of the operations manual.

- Housing development

A strong residential neighborhood in the downtown area would provide a strong sense of 'community' and the continuous presence of people, around the clock, would make the center of Providence come alive at weekends. Perhaps more importantly, there would be a lobby for safety, cleanliness and amenities.

The projects identified by the Strategy, which add up to over 1,800 units, are geared to middle and upper-middle income individuals and families and are identified as potentials for six sites in the Planning Area as follows:

1. The Retail Core - The rehabilitation of the Shepard's Building (170 units), the Outlet Company (320 units), Westminster East (130 units) and Westminster West (50 units).
2. Weybosset Hill - The rehabilitation of the Caesar Misch Building and surrounding area into a proposed 'Weybosset Crescent Project' (120 units) for which a prototype model is detailed (p.105).
3. The Courthouse District - The development of three currently disused industrial structures in 'The Art Factory' (150 units) for occupancy by city artists.
4. Kennedy Plaza - The construction of two housing towers on Parcel 1 of the Capital Center Project (80 units in each tower), as well as the conversion of the old Union Station into luxury condominiums (160 units).
5. Waterfront District - The construction of luxury

condominiums with views to the new Waterfront Park (160 units).

6. Capital Center - The construction of high income townhouses or garden apartments (40 units).
7. Jewelry District - Over a period of ten years, the development of rental and owner-occupied residences (500 units) in both new construction and rehabilitation.

- Attractions strategy

A major goal of the Downtown Development Strategy is the reawakening of downtown Providence during the evenings and weekends. Key to this goal is attracting visitors, residents from Providence's neighborhoods and downtown workers. Five proposed attractions are ventured to complement existing centers of activity.

The proposed attractions are of two kinds: first, cultural, entertainment and educational attractions housed in buildings; second, programs or events to be organized and held at various locations, including festivals, fairs, concerts and outdoor performances. The five proposed attractions are as follows:

1. A revitalized retail/restaurant/entertainment district that would include: an improved streetscape and new festival lighting; streetscape and lighting improvements on Washington Street and Union Street; and a new Entertainment Center, linking Washington to Westminster Mall (including a restaurant and cinemas).
2. A theme exhibit, such as an historic railroad engine.

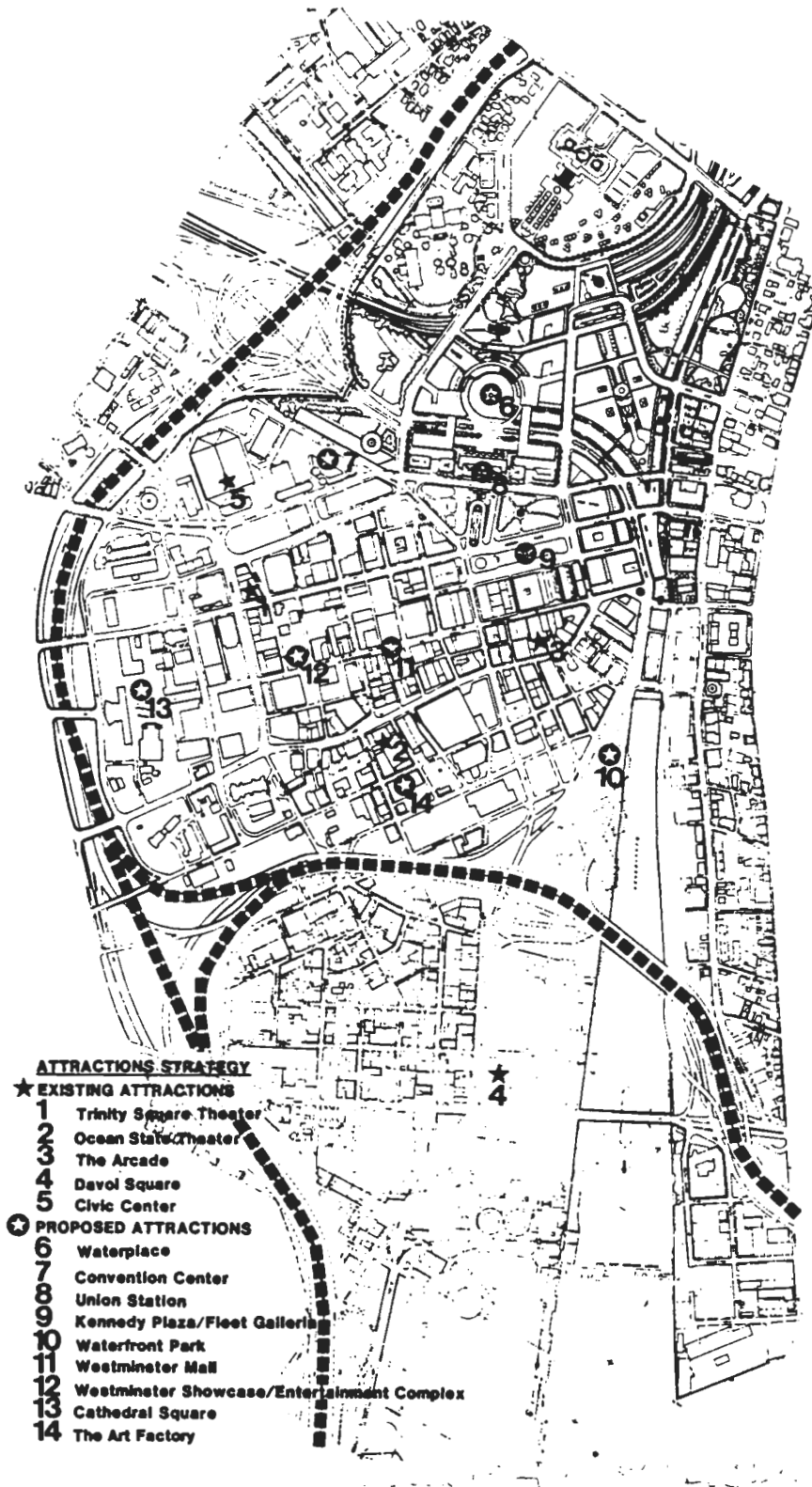
along with performance facilities in Kennedy Plaza, and demountable festival exhibit structures in the Fleet Building Galleria.

3. An appropriately themed stage setting and performance facilities and equipment in Cathedral Square for celebrations and festival events, to be funded in association with a local sponsor or sponsors.
4. An Art Factory to be developed in association with housing considerations which would consist of exhibit and sales studios for artists, sculptors and craftspersons with interior and exterior space for related entertainment activities.
5. A theme exhibit, such as an historic coastal steamer, tied to an appropriately designed restaurant/retail attraction on the waterfront, also to be undertaken with assistance from sponsors.

The locations of existing and proposed attractions are shown in Map 4.3.

- The future downtown

The consultants anticipate that implementation of their Strategy will result in a very different downtown by the year 2000. Noting that we are now closer to the year 2000 than to the year 1970 and that incredible changes have occurred in Providence in the period 1960 to 1986, Steve Carr (1986) notes that his perspective on achievable change is a feasible one. If their recipe for growth is followed he firmly believes that, "The core will once again be the vibrant



MAP 4.3

THE ATTRACTIONS STRATEGY

center of the city's economic and cultural life. It will be a pleasant and exciting place to live, work and play. It will once again be the pride of its citizens". The consultants expect to see the following in place by the turn of the next century:

1. Westminster Street will be revived as the active spine of downtown: a simple, elegant and colorful tree-lined brick street. At midday and on many weekends it will be filled with crowds of shoppers, enjoying a renewed retail district.
2. The upper floors throughout the old retail core will once again be filled, the predominant use being residential rather than commercial. Downtown office workers, students and the elderly will add immeasurably to the quality of the street life, helping it to seem safe, clean and orderly.
3. Weybosset will continue to be a strong street and become more so with the construction of Weybosset Crescent and the filling of the upper floors with housing. The Outlet development will replace a present major 'dead spot' with new life. The Arcade office development will provide continuity between the two districts, retail and financial.
4. Washington Street will continue in its role as a support street with bus traffic and parking structures, but it will be softened by trees. Restaurants will develop in even greater numbers, the new structures having windows

and canopies adding color to the scene.

5. A new ring of attractions will be in place, surrounding the old core, each linked to new developments. Next to the existing Civic Center will be a Convention Center, linked, in turn, to a new convention hotel and a 900 car parking garage.
6. Kennedy Plaza will be the major focus for downtown celebration, hosting several fairs and festivals each summer, as well as a Winterfest. A train exhibit will add interest to the Plaza, linked through specialty retail to the waterfront and Capital Center. The Fleet Galleria will provide a setting for changing exhibits and performances and will extend the weekend festivals inside.
7. River relocation will be complete and the city will have a handsome new waterfront, as well as improved circulation in the core. The Dyer/Eddy interchange with I-195 will have been reconstructed to open the city's old dock area to a mixed redevelopment of restaurants, luxury housing, highrise offices and shops.
8. Another focal point will be the Art Factory at Pine and Richmond Streets. Here, in converted factory buildings will be a rich mix of artists' studios, exhibit spaces and a restaurant. This complex will build on the presence of RISD's faculty and students and Providence's rich tradition in the arts. Other housing will cluster around giving a 'mini-Soho' type atmosphere.

9. The Jewelry District will take off as more and more people seek to move back into the desirable downtown area. This area has the potential for creating several thousand more housing units, initially in converted factories and then in townhouse development.
10. Access and circulation will be much improved by the work at the Dyer/Eddy interchange and on the ring road. Modest improvements to other arterial streets, such as trees and sidewalk repaving, will attract commercial activity, built on increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The following section looks at how Carr-Lynch-Levine hoped to bring about this idealistic, but desirable, future downtown.

4.3 Planning, funding and management

Perhaps even more important than the substantive elements of the Development Strategy are the recommendations for its implementation. The consultants paid as much attention to planning techniques, funding schemes and strategy management as the actual physical and economic plans themselves. A number of innovative schemes were proposed as vehicles for successful goal attainment.

- Management: The Providence Company

Section II of this thesis dwells at length upon the implications of and alternatives for a new management agency for downtown Providence. The prototype proposed by Carr-

Lynch-Levine is seen as the "principal energizing element of the strategy". For this reason, the Department of Planning and Development interpreted this key proposal as the most significant and far-reaching of the Strategy's findings (Arthur Markos, interview, July, 1986).

According to the prototype model, the Providence Company would be a non-profit private entity that would provide development packaging and management services for the Downtown Planning Area. It would operate as an arm of the planning department, providing services to and operating programs in the Downtown Planning Area on a contract basis with City agencies and private firms.

Policy direction would be provided by a Board of Directors comprised of public officials, downtown business persons, and private and civic leaders appointed by the Mayor. The Providence Company would employ a professional staff to manage the several action strategies proposed in the report. It would receive financial support for its operating expenses and programs from a Downtown Tax Increment District to be set up by the Department of Planning and Development.

The Company would provide development coordination and development packaging services directly by its professional staff; it would direct advertising and promotional campaigns; it would supervise maintenance and security services (on a contract basis); and it would directly control expenses associated with Westminster Mall. In short, it would be the principal means of direct Strategy implementation.

- Public improvements

In addition to the plans for retail, commercial, housing and attractions, several related improvements to the public environment and downtown image are proposed (p.51).

Substantial treatment is outlined for: retail streets (Westminster Mall, Union Street, and Washington Street); the ring road (including the repair of Pine and Friendship Streets, widening of sidewalks and a bolder, more visible graphic identification of the ring road system); parking structures (principally in terms of renovation, expansion and upgrading of existing garages); and the waterfront area (following the improvements to the Dyer/Eddy interchange, all improvements concur with William Warner's Waterfront Plan).

- Zoning and design review

According to the Strategy, modifications in downtown zoning will also require action (p.55). As suggested by Haar and Horowitz (1984), downtown zoning should encourage the fine grain mix of offices, housing and retail adopted by the Strategy. The consultants support the City's intention to re-zone the entire downtown core as a C-3 Downtown Commercial Zone (a zone which would permit all uses in C-2, as well as those in R-4, with only use and not area controls) which would promote mixed use and place no physical limitations on downtown housing.

Parking and servicing requirements should also support the increasing density of downtown. The Strategy proposes a lower parking space per square foot ratio for new

construction in conjunction with substantial financial assistance to support future parking development. Aware of the somewhat conservative nature of the city's politics, the report does not recommend that any special incentive bonuses or sophisticated provisions such as TDR (transferable development rights) or linkage schemes would be appropriate.

In respect to design review (always a controversial matter), the Mayor is urged to establish a new entity, separate from the proposed Providence Company, which would review major development projects, specifically those that affect the historic character of downtown, as well as those exceeding specified magnitudes of development and those to be built in prominent locations. The Design Review Committee would be composed of five to ten members and be representative of each design profession (architecture, landscape architecture, planning, urban design and engineering), the development community, the historic preservation interests, and the Department of Planning and Development. Recommendations would be made to the Mayor and to the D.P.D. as to the approval, modification, need for further review, or disapproval of design projects.

- Phasing

For the sake of convenience and practicality, the Strategy would be implemented in three phases, each of five years. The consultants are aware that flexibility will be necessary as the type and rate of development proposals (the response of the private sector) are assessed. The report

suggests that the phasing will "serve as a guide to the operations of the Providence Company and the D.P.D. and as an illustration of what is possible" (p.60).

Briefly, Phase I (1986-1990) calls for concentration of effort upon the Retail District with particular emphasis upon Westminster Mall. Projects such as the Outlet, Shepard's, the Entertainment Center and Weybosset Crescent would be initiated. Concomitantly, would be the completion of the Lasalle Square office development, ground breaking for parking structures on Washington and Fountain Streets, the initiation of the Attractions Strategy and the establishment of the Providence Company.

Phase II (1990-1995) would see a major emphasis upon downtown housing, particularly in the middle- to upper middle-income sectors. Upper floor conversions would predominate. In addition, there would be an emerging market for luxury condominiums in the tower at Union Station and on the Dyer Street Waterfront. The absorption of office space in both Class 'A' and 'B' structures would pick up speed, while retail expansion would take the form of 30,000 square feet of infill on Westminster Mall. Two new attractions would be added: the Arts Factory and the Waterfront Theme Park, the latter to include an historic steamship exhibit.

Phase III (1995-2000) predicts 420 units of housing developed in more peripheral areas of downtown such as the Waterfront, Capital Center and the Jewelry District. 700,000 square feet of office space would be occupied, 600,000 square

feet of it in new structures in Capital Center and on Dyer Street. The retail component of Union Station would be completed (60,000 square feet) together with a new apparel anchor at Westminster and Snow (30,000 square feet). Parking structures for 1,600 new spaces would be built next to the Courthouse and the new waterfront office building.

- Program costs

The Providence Company - the key vehicle of implementation for the Strategy - would be activated on a full-time basis in 1987. Its operating budget for the first year would be \$660,000 plus a one-time capital allowance of \$40,000 to cover furniture, furnishings and equipment, giving a total of \$700,000 (Carr-Lynch-Levine, 1986). The operating budget would increase by one percent per year to annual amount of \$751,000 in the year 2000. Total cumulative cost for the agency over 14 years, including interest, would be \$9,977,000.

The Providence Company would oversee and coordinate the development of the following: the Attractions Strategy (at a cost of \$4,000,000); the ten parking garages (at a cost of \$27,086,000); and the ring road improvements (at a cost of \$500,000). The total operating costs of the Providence Company and the above outlays, plus debt service for all improvements through the year 2000, would be \$31,032,000.

These total costs would be supported largely through tax increment income from new development over the fifteen year period in the sum of \$26,611,000. An additional \$2,406,000

would be derived from the increase in value to be generated from revaluation. The remaining \$2,015,000 would be derived from common area or promotion payments by retail establishments as new leases are concluded starting in 1993. The Downtown Planning Area would correspond to the new Tax Increment Financing District starting in 1986. Assuming activation of the Providence Company in 1987, the Development Strategy Program would begin to incur costs a year in advance of potential supporting income from T.I.F.. Temporary anticipation notes would therefore be necessary for a period of up to three years in advance of the tax increment process. Table 4.1 is a detailed summary of the Development Strategy Financing Program as developed for the report.

4.4 Anticipated community benefits

The Downtown Development Strategy, initiated and managed by the Providence Company in the manner proposed by the Carr-Lynch-Levine study, claims to generate the following substantial benefits for the City of Providence and its residents:

1. Employment - More than 12,000 jobs would be added in offices, stores, service establishments, institutions and other developments in the Downtown Planning Area by the year 2000 (an average increase of more than 800 per year over 15 years).
2. Construction - More than \$200,000,000 of new construction and rehabilitation would be put in place

TABLE 4.1

Providence Downtown Development Strategy: Financing Program

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996*	1997	1998	1999	2000	TOTAL
1 The Providence Company Req't. Budget \$(000)		(700)°		-1437		680	687	694	701	708	715	722	729	736	744	751	9977
2 Attractions: Capital \$(000)				1000	500	500	--	--	1000	--	1000	--	--	--	--	--	4000
3 Annual Payment to Finance: \$105/1000 \$(000)				105	53	53	--	--	105	--	105	--	--	--	--	--	
4 OPERATIVE DEBT SERVICE				-105	158	211	211	211	211	211	316	316	316	316	316	316	3214
5 Parking: No. of Spaces				280	470	190	150	200	--	300	1200	--	400	--	--	1200	4390
6 Annual Payment to Finance: \$650/space (000)				182	306	124	98	130	--	195	780	--	260	--	--	780	
7 OPERATIVE DEBT SERVICE				-182	488	612	710	840	840	1035	1815	1815	2075	2075	2075	2855	17417
8 Ring Road \$(000)				--	--	--	--	--	500	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	500
9 Annual Payment to Finance: \$105/1000				--	--	--	--	--	53	53	53	53	53	53	53	53	424
10 Annual Expenses and Debt Service: Cumulative				-1724	1319	1503	1608	1745	1805	2007	2899	2906	3173	3180	3188	3975	31032
11 Office Space Added (000)sf x Tax Increment \$2.50/sf			60	60	100	70	200	--	140	200	--	--	200	--	200	200	
12 OPERATIVE \$(000)			-180	400	575	1075	1075	1425	1425	1925	1925	2425	2425	2925	3425	3425	21175
13 Office Space Absorbed (000)sf		74	74	74	74	74	32	32	32	32	32	20	20	20	20	20	
14 Retail Space Added (000)sf				110	--	30	--	--	--	--	--	--	30	--	--	60	
15 Tax Incrmt \$1.00/sf <u>CLM</u> \$(000)				110	110	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	170	170	170	230	1940
16 Retail Sp. Absorbed: (000) sf		30	--	--	--	--	10	10	10	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
17 Rental Housing Added (units)				320	170	120	50	130	100	100	150	100	--	100	--	100	
18 Tax Incrmt \$500/unit <u>CLM</u> \$(000)				-160	245	305	330	395	445	495	570	620	620	670	670	720	6245
19 Sales Housing Added (units)				--	--	80	--	--	80	--	80	--	--	80	--	40	
20 Tax Incrmt \$1000/unit <u>CLM</u> \$(000)				--	--	80	80	80	160	160	240	240	240	320	320	360	2280
21 Hotel Added (rooms)				--	--	--	--	--	--	--	200	--	--	--	--	--	
22 Tax Incrmt \$1000/rm <u>CLM</u> \$(000)				--	--	--	--	--	--	--	200	200	200	200	200	200	1200
23 TOTAL TAX INCREMENT FROM NEW DEVELOP. \$(000)				-420	755	1100	1625	1690	2170	2220	3075	3125	3655	3785	4285	4935	32840
24 Tax Incrmt. Req'd From Revalued Tax Base \$(000) (line 10-line 23)				1304	564	403	--	55	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
25 Tax Increment in excess of annual expenses and debt service (line 23-line 10)				--	--	--	17	--	365	213	176	219	482	605	1097	960	
26 Income from Common Area charges or Assessment District				--	--	--	--	--	200	215	230	245	260	275	290	300	
27 Graduated payments from Tax Increment from Revalued Tax Base, to be less than 5% of present tax yield				300	300	300	300	300	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
28 Tax Increment in excess of annual expenses and debt service and adjusted for deferred payments from line 27				--	--	--	--	--	421	428	406	464	742	880	1387	1260	

Source: Carr-Lynch-Levine Development Strategy, 1986

in the Downtown Planning Area by the year 2000 (an average of more than \$13,300,000 a year over 15 years).

3. Retail/Restaurant Sales - This sector would increase from approximately \$50,000,000 in 1985 to \$100,000,000 in the year 2000 (1985 dollar value). Expenditures per employee would increase as a result of broadening shopping opportunities, and the number of employees would increase as demand from a wider market area grows.
4. Property Values and Tax Income - Approximately \$5,000,000 per year in additional property tax income would flow to the City by the year 2000, generated by new development and by conversion of vacant commercial space to residential use. Additional property tax income would be generated by the current revaluation program and by the proposed downtown tax increment.
5. The Downtown Neighborhood - A final benefit, not directly quantifiable, would be the creation of a multi-faceted downtown neighborhood: more people in the streets in non-office hours and more young, energetic individuals who will be educated and therefore constitute a strong lobby for safety, services and sensible management.

These recommendations and anticipated benefits combine to paint a rosy picture of future downtown life. But, as in any planning document, there are flaws. Whether or not these flaws will deter the Administration from embracing the report

wholeheartedly is the subject of a personal response to the consultants' work in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

A REVIEW AND CRITIQUE OF THE STRATEGY ON ITS FACE:

A PERSONAL RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTANTS' REPORT

"The city has fallen prey to an attitude that can be called urban Darwinism --- the survival of only the most lucrative use of any given plot of land."

Paul Goldberger, 1982

"Was it ever the intention of our city planners to have a downtown in which every block seems to be developed to its utmost financial potential?"

David Smith, 1980

5.1 The context for criticism

Planners are no different from others operating within the urban scene in that they are subject to continuous change. They are different in that they are a specialized component of public policy charged with intervening in the process of change to mould the urban scene in the public interest.

This matter of intervention is a contentious one. To what extent intervention will take place is subject to the political and economic climates, as well as to prevailing public opinion.

In the current mood of the New Conservatism, local government is constrained on the one hand by containment and contraction in intergovernmental revenue exchange and, on the other, by a private sector whose good health promotes development.

Coordinating public redevelopment strategies and the ambitions of the market in order to bring about positive change in central cities is no more and no less than a balancing act. Coaxing the market to perform in the public interest demands of the planner unique skills in the mobilization of diverse actors and resources. Whether or not the Downtown Providence Development Strategy enhances that City's ability to generate growth in its core, not only for the developers but for the citizenry at large, is the subject of this chapter; an analysis and critique.

The analysis attempts to remain within the confines of

the Strategy and the contextual setting of downtown Providence. The assumption is made at the outset that one does not need to know the 'universe'. However, where the observation suggests weaknesses in underlying constructs, arguments for alternative approaches venture into the realms of social and economic externalities.

An effort is made to lead all suggestions and recommendations back to their applicability to downtown. In order to do this, a question is posed as guarantor: How will any additional information or further analyses, overlooked by the consultants, help the Mayor and his executive advisors in promoting downtown redevelopment and future management?

5.2 An orientation of opinions

The parameters set by the consulting firm determine the goals they set for themselves and, therefore, for the City. It is one aim of this chapter to state the assumptions of the Development Strategy and to critique them.

Such a critique will be colored by the preconceptions, mind set and knowledge of the critic. It is hoped that the biases will be apparent and need not be set down here. This effort is both an intuitive and substantiated attempt to clarify a personal response to the Strategy.

5.3 The development of the Strategy, an overview

- The scope of the report

Carr, Lynch Associates have set down clearly the

parameters of their study, "...its focus has been on the historic core: that area bounded by the highways and the river".

An analysis of existing conditions comprehensively describes current physical and socio-economic characteristics of Downtown in well-defined functional areas. A sub-section, 'Development Plans, Trends and Opportunities' (pp.23-27) looks at the processes of change.

While Carr, Lynch state that their concentration is upon the office worker market, they also note that downtown "will not come fully alive and prosper on this market alone". The question is raised, therefore, why did the financial analysis performed by Melvin Levine Associates concentrate solely on this limited, existing market?

The omission of further research in this area is no doubt based upon the prior experiences of the consultants. However, of the three broad 'Goals of the Strategy' (p.47), one is devoted to "increased shopping by area residents..."

It is felt that the implicit assumptions of the document that there is a citywide or regional market to be tapped (no matter how marginal in anticipated impact), without further investigation, borders on conjecture.

Without establishing the precise role of downtown Providence as a retail and service center, it might be difficult to convince major business concerns to locate and to make the physical improvements, particularly in respect to accessibility and parking, necessary to attract a wider

market.

We do not need to know the 'universe'. It is a fact that Warwick has become the retail capital of Rhode Island with a sphere of influence across much of the state (refer to the economic analysis in Chapter 2). While avoiding the hypothetical constructs of complex location theories, it might have been appropriate for the consultants to have conducted an analysis of:

- (a) The goods and services offered by Warwick;
- (b) A tax base analysis, over time, to establish the changing patterns of revenues;
- (c) The market pull factor in terms of distance-decay;
- (d) A Nearest Neighbor Analysis using Reilly's Coefficient to establish the breakpoint of markets between Providence and Warwick.

While these methodologies are far from complex, they might help to establish:

- (a) The current role of Providence in the pattern of retail trade;
- (b) Whether Providence fulfills a regional role in the provision of goods and services, and in what sectors;
- (c) Whether Providence is being bypassed by consumers in the north of the state in their selection of Warwick;
- (d) The role of malls in redefining the role of the central city in an urbanized state;
- (e) Clarification of the most appropriate response by the City to the prevailing economy in maximizing outcomes

of public monies expended on redevelopment efforts;

(f) Avoidance of duplication of service provision in areas Providence is not financially/fiscally able to compete.

Rhode Island does not have powers to plan on a truly regional basis. Municipalities are in direct competition one with another, despite the fact that they are all components of the same urban system. Interstate highways are linear. The succession of individual economies along them is not.

In order to make the report's goals more relevant to a secure economic future downtown and to establish a scope such that regional trends are understood and encompassed by proposed strategies, a limited regional economic analysis might have been useful. At present, the summarized impacts of the Strategy are not convincing (pp.6-7). Rather than merely suggest that, "This is the kind of process which we have seen in Boston and many other cities", the consultants ought to be encouraged to confirm their assumptions.

The City needs to know more. The scope must be broadened to facilitate efficient planning.

- The Overall Development Strategy

In his second 'State of the City Address' (1986), Mayor Joseph R. Paolino, Jr. indicated that despite recent attention upon downtown, his administration would never forsake the neighborhoods: "Those whose interests lie in downtown development must understand the depth of our commitment to the neighborhoods".

Nowhere in the report is there a reference to downtown

Providence's role as a component element of a citywide urban system. The core is viewed as a self-contained entity. Perhaps even more serious than the regional deficiencies detailed above, then, is an absence of research in respect to the functional relationship between the core and surrounding areas of the City of Providence. This relationship is the outcome of processes operating throughout the historic development of Providence and is recognized by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, which stated in its Downtown Providence Report of 1981, "The Downtown Survey [of historic buildings and landmarks] must further be viewed in a city-wide context...", recognizing the interdependence and continuity of functional development in the city's geographic districts.

Downtown areas have seen their role either supplanted or subsumed by suburban or urban fringe developments, particularly in the manufacturing and retail sectors (Friedman, 1981). But, as Susan Feinstein has noted (1981), there is something more than a residual role performed by the core in its servicing of the needs of residents of inner city neighborhoods. The report neither acknowledges nor builds on the existing and potential Providence markets.

In making unsubstantiated assumptions about the insignificance of both intra- and inter-city market trends and patterns, the Strategy is lacking in its analysis of the city's economic base. Doubts may therefore be raised as to the accuracy of its future scenarios and financial specifics.

By insularising its 'Overall Development Strategy', the analysis concentrates on maximizing the response of the existing private sector economy to significant public sector activity. The development strategy is thorough enough within the confines of its limited ambition, but the sum of its parts gives few guarantees to those who might have doubts about assumption reliability. An underlying assumption, for example, might be that certain 'knock-on' effects of the thriving Boston economy would be felt in Providence. Quite so, but to what extent?

- The plan of action

The operational aspects of the report have been well thought out. The proposed Providence Company and the detailed 'Action Strategies' (p.48) show astuteness in the area of phased policy, in terms of broad theory if not in the specifics of application.

Particularly reassuring is the notion of employing a professional staff to support the activities of the Providence Company. Financial advice from qualified bankers and realtors, for example, would be crucial in helping plans win support from the business community. Such external expertise would complement the knowledge of the Department of Planning and Development which, perhaps wisely, would have some control over the allocation of program funding, according to the consultants' model (p.48, para.4).

The hierarchical linkages between public, private and public-private agencies certainly deal with potential

accusations of venturism, but it is possible that the already comprehensive supply of administrative units would become somewhat top-heavy should another be created (see Chapter 6 for a more detailed analysis of this potential problem). The roles of the City and the Department of Planning and Development in the implementation of the strategies remain a little ambiguous. They appear to have the ability to act as a check. Should not they be more active?

While much emphasis is placed upon an anticipated positive response from the private sector, the related public improvements and actions (pp.51-57) to improve misjudged design decisions of the past and to create a more seductive physical fabric in the future are indeed impressive. The new treatment for Westminster Mall, the execution of a free-flowing ring road system and the use of tax increment financing for servicing debts on parking structures are both timely and location-appropriate policies. These schemes, when viewed in map and plan form, appear intelligently logical solutions to physical problems which have become compounded over time. It is in these areas that public monies might most efficaciously be disposed of, given the anticipated response of the private sector.

5.4 Elements of the report

This chapter is not intended to be damning. However, in retrospect (and it is hoped there would be no such need), should the Strategy fail to hold solutions to the downtown

economy, this student would not recommend that policy makers look back through its pages for alternative wisdom.

The 'bottom line' solution is getting more people with more dollars downtown. Whether or not the consultants' recommendations will help to do this is the subject of a critique of the program elements. Having commented upon the validity of the scope and goals of Carr, Lynch Associates' work and generalized about subject matter and coverage, specific schemes are now reviewed in the light of negative statements already made about the market analysis.

- Bright lights and colorful canopies

The 'Disneyland Gambit' is to be played in Downtown Providence. A potential developer of the Outlet Store property proposes an enclosed mall as a specialty retail center.

The moderate successes of the Arcade and the Davol Square developments are to be translated into a centrally located festival-type market area with the unreserved endorsement of the report. But where are the figures? It is clear to all who live and work downtown that there are times of the day when the core is dead. Evening and weekend activities exhibit a paucity which belies the term central city. There is no defined historical background or specified linkage of the proposed mall with any other current or proposed activity, nor does the retail strategy consider potential linkages with possible attractions on the new Waterfront or within the Capital Center area. Once again

there is a problem of isolating sites from the market. The market itself is not specified other than in the term, "area residents". The question might be posed, "Can downtown Providence support two or more specialty store/festival-type developments?" The report ought to specify who the new tenants might be and what clientele they might attract.

The proposed development of an entertainment complex more directly addresses the problem of an empty core. This would undoubtedly be a pull factor to area residents and heighten the profile of downtown. Bright lights lend warmth and identity to a central zone. Coupled with the recommendations for working with restaurateurs, entertainment proprietors and retail businessmen to improve facades and signage (p.84), as well as the elements in the physical design proposals, the report's concentration on revamping the night-time tone of the area appears both valid and workable.

- Offices, offices everywhere

Considering the extent to which the economy is assumed to rely on a thriving office sector, it is perhaps surprising that, while housing and retail activity are deemed worthy of separate chapters, office development is inserted as a series of sub-sections (p.31, p.40). Yet, the first goal of the report is to "Attract new office growth to locations within the core, as a first priority" (p.2).

This anomaly aside, it is surprising that the cornerstone of Carr, Lynch/Mel Levine's Development Strategy

does not examine the existing office economy, let alone provide a profile of likely future clients, in anything but the vaguest terms. Vacancy rates and absorption rates are not placed in an historical setting. It is not clear whether Class B absorption rates are low because there is no demand or because of poor structure condition (p.31, para.1). There are current vacancies. The combined current absorption rate of Class A and Class B spaces "has been proceeding at rates of 100,000 to 200,000 square feet per year". This vagueness is carried through to the sub-section titled, Phasing, where it is recognized that Class B office space is currently over-supplied and that, "the amount of new space added in the first phase is about half of what can be added in later phases". One is left wondering what economic event is going to precede the ability of downtown Providence to support large increases in office space.

What about those individuals who owned the now vacant Class B spaces? Where are they now? Why should they and others like them come downtown?

- A pleasant place for people to live

The six major areas designated for residential development are well chosen. It is refreshing to see the promotion of residential uses in the retail core (p.98). The proposed rehabilitation of the Shepard's building and the upper floors of the Outlet Company will contribute to a stronger presence outside office hours.

The upper floors along Westminster Mall are thought to

be of some value as residences, but there is no substantiation of this. The over-concentration on luxury condominium developments and costly conversion dwellings will change the flavor of downtown and greatly inflate property values. However, the housing strategy does address the need to maximize space utilization, given the shortfalls in anticipated land take-up during the earlier phases of the project.

It is recognized and accepted that the consultants did not see themselves as social engineers in any philanthropic sense of the term. But given the City's ability to influence land use patterns, it is hoped that the administration would look beyond the optimization of developers' profit margins by providing incentives to less exclusive residential development. The homeless problem in Providence will worsen considerably and the "urban Darwinism" feared by Goldberger become a reality if the public sector does not stem profiteering in land speculation. The fault does not lie with individual developers. Neither should they be discouraged from participating fully in the redevelopment of downtown Providence. Rather, a more balanced approach to residential construction should be derived whereby outcomes include both private profit and a mix of dwellings. Planners should remind themselves that while their first priority might be to patch up the city's financial structure, they have a duty to the wider public interest.

The Mayor and his department directors should be

encouraged to promote an assessment of housing need - both for low income as well as upper income dwellings - to underwrite and complement the stated perceptions of likely market provision.

The mechanisms for leveraging alternative funding are excellently presented (p.110) and should indeed be incorporated into the strategy for residential development.

5.5 Conclusions: a personal reaction of guarded optimism

With something bordering on guarded optimism, the City of Providence should be encouraged to embrace the general tenet of the Strategy. Its stance is one of realism at a time when public funds are restricted. The City has many responsibilities and must allocate its monies equitably among valid competing interests.

The major reservations expressed in this chapter implore the City to participate in on-going research into the role of Providence and its most appropriate future development. This does not mean that Phase I of the plan should not go ahead as specified in the document. Not knowing the 'universe' is part and parcel of public decision-making. Yet there should be moves toward reduced dependence on the market to bring about growth. The City ought never to allow itself to become a pawn in its own plan. The issues over the roles of the public and private sectors being hammered out in discussions over the Capital Center project should be brought to bear on downtown itself. How sad it would be if the good intentions

of the current administration were frustrated by the equally well-intentioned private sector's desire to earn for its shareholders a handsome return.

Let not the words at the opening of Chapter 8 in the report (p.119) be repeated at the turn of the next century: "Despite all this positive activity, the long awaited downtown renaissance is not yet dramatically visible. Indeed there is a sense in the old retail core of continuing decline, with a few bright spots. Why is this so?....."

CHAPTER 6
THE EXISTING PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE
IN DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE

"A peculiar combination of provincialism and pride seemed to hold the city back..."

"Mayor Cianci was forced from office after being convicted of assaulting a contractor whom he suspected was carrying on an affair with his estranged wife... Joseph R. Paolino, Jr., 30, squeaked into City Hall after winning a hotly contested special election by 12 votes..."

Caroline Knapp and Peter Kadzis, 1986
on politics and development in Providence

6.1 Relevance of the existing milieu to planning

It has been the experience of researchers conducting empirical studies of planners and their environments, that planners often avoid conflict and controversy by invoking the obscure ethics of rational objectivity. Rabinovitz (1967) notes: "Although the addition of roles required for implementation may be only an adjunct to other conflicts between the skills needed by planners and the requirements of professionalism, it does not appear that even if the resource potential of planners for exerting influence is substantial, their disposition to use these resources in the political arena is limited".

Before assessing the impact of the Providence Downtown Development Strategy upon the Administration's planning professionals (the theme of Section II), a summary is provided here of the structure of planning and management agencies currently operating downtown, as well as an assessment of why another agency might be needed. Such an overview is considered essential to an understanding of the mechanisms for review and adoption (Chapters 7 through 10 of this thesis) and paramount to evaluating alternative policies for implementation (Chapters 11 and 12). Table 6.1 is provided as a guide to the structure, power and role of the many agencies currently in existence.

6.2 Fragmented planning: who does what, when and where?

Eighteen separate entities are identified as having some

TABLE 6.1
MATRIX OF THE STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF
EXISTING DOWNTOWN AGENCIES

AGENCY TITLE	STRUCTURE			POWERS				ROLE				
	PUBLIC BODY	PRIVATE NON-PROFIT	MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION	LOAN MAKING	GRANT GIVING	BOND FUNDS	ZONING/ DESIGN REVIEW	TECHNICAL/ EDUCATIONAL	PROMOTIONAL/ MARKETING	LOBBYING	MAINTENANCE/ UPKEEP	MANAGEMENT FUNCTION
BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION		X	X					X				
CAPITAL CENTER COMM.	X						X	X	X			X
CITY COUNCIL CMTTEE. ON URBAN REDEVELOPT, RENEWAL AND PLANNING	X					X		X				
CITY PLAN COMMISSION	X						X					
DEPT. OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X
DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE IMPROVEMENT ASSOC.		X	X					X		X	X	X
GREATER PROVIDENCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE		X			X			X	X	X		X
GREATER PROVIDENCE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU		X	X					X	X	X		X
IN TOWN		X						X	X	X	X	
PROMENADE CENTER		X						X	X	X		X
PROV. HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION	X						X	X				
PROV. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORP.		X		X			X	X	X			
PROV. FOUNDATION		X						X	X	X		
PROVIDENCE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORP.		X		X			X	X	X			
PROVIDENCE OFF-STREET PARKING	X					X	X				X	X
PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	
PROVIDENCE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY	X			X		X	X	X				X
WASHINGTON STREET BUSINESS ASSOCIATION			X						X	X		

impact upon planning and management in downtown Providence. While only a few of them will have prima facie involvement in the implementation of the Strategy, and even fewer in its adoption, the ramifications of downtown development will affect - either directly or indirectly - the operations of them all. The matrix of agency structure and operation in Table 6.1 summarizes the descriptions below. (As is the case in the matrix, agencies are listed in alphabetical order and not in respect to their importance to the downtown community.)

- Business Owners and Managers Association

This is a local branch of a national organization, consisting largely of property management companies and building owners, including banks and speculative property interests. It holds monthly luncheon meetings with a comprehensive speaking program. Guest speakers give lectures and hold discussions aimed at updating the business community with technical information, especially in respect to building-related problems. B.O.M.A. also includes major supply concerns (utilities, elevator companies and service contractors). An annual membership fee helps B.O.M.A. to lobby for major downtown projects such as the Hurricane Barrier.

- Capital Center Commission

Formed in the early 1980s by state enabling legislation and City institution, the Capital Center Commission is a highly specialized supra-zoning body charged with overseeing

the application of strict design review regulations within the Capital Center Project Area. Its management function is supplemented by its role as a comprehensive information and technical resource. The C.C.C. has an annual budget of some \$100,000 per year - apportioned equally by City and state - with a Board approved by the Mayor of Providence, the Governor and the Providence Foundation.

- **City Council Committee on Urban Redevelopment,
Renewal and Planning**

This is the major policy crunching sub-committee of the City Council which digests and prepares urban issues to be put before Council. Taking its lead from the executive planning professionals, the five members of the municipal legislature who sit on this committee represent the questions and concerns of Providence's constituents in respect to urban development.

- **City Plan Commission**

Final legislative approval of zoning is granted by this body, which holds open public meetings and grants variances and special exceptions. Technical support is furnished by the Department of Planning and Development, which works with the Commission to generate relevant zoning ordinances and updates to the city's master and neighborhood plans, as well as to the Capital Improvements Budget.

- **Department of Planning and Development**

This large city agency is the official executive planning body of Providence, but it encompasses a wide range

of planning and planning-related research and line functions. The Department is a composite of numerous, previously separate, government agencies which were combined under the Paolino Administration for the sake of efficiency. The Department operates under the following broad sections: Economic Development, Neighborhood Services, Management and Construction, Policy and Legal Affairs, Planning, and Fiscal Affairs. Its structure makes the Department uniquely adaptable to planning at both the metapolicy and neighborhood level.

- Downtown Providence Improvement Association

This private, non-profit agency is paid, in part, by the City to maintain and upkeep the streetscapes of downtown Providence and, in particular, Westminster Mall. In recent years, the D.P.I.A. has become expert in the technologies of garbage disposal and street maintenance, as well as in formulating employment policies for Providence's youth and minority populations.

- Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber was originally established in the late 19th. century to serve the interests of the city's merchants. Its membership has expanded to include much of northern Rhode Island's metropolitan region, many subscribers holding membership of a local chamber as well as the Providence Chamber. The G.P.C.C. is increasingly involving itself in more socially oriented programs - Jobs for Youth and child care, for example - and is able to receive federal monies and

make loans and grants with its 501-C.3 tax status. Its lobbying power is directed mainly toward state economic issues; it created the Providence Foundation to focus on specifically downtown concerns.

- Greater Providence Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Bureau has two arms: an Authority and a line or service function. The Authority is an entity created through state enabling legislation, whose funds derive from a 2 percent room tax on the three downtown hotels (the Biltmore, Holiday Inn and Marriot). Its Board includes the general managers of all three hotels. The Authority is obligated to pass on its budget to the service function of the Bureau which has an Executive Committee and a membership organization (consisting of downtown restaurateurs, bar owners and travel agents). The Bureau assembles convention packages (in conjunction with the hotels) and runs an information/promotion service for visitors to the city.

- In Town

A branch of the Chamber of Commerce, this organization was founded in 1976. Its membership consists largely of the retail sector of the Chamber. The agency is limited (at least, in its current guise) to running a promotional calendar, while its influence is constrained due to the decline in the representation of retail uses in recent years. Members are overwhelmingly individual store owners from whom money is raised annually, essentially for seasonal advertising campaigns. In Town is typical of central city

'advertising cooperatives'.

- Promenade Center

This is a revitalization project on a scale rarely seen in Providence. It is a private effort by a consortium of developers and commercial interests to develop the old Foundry Building on the fringe of downtown. Still in its planning phase, the construction of a hotel, a conference center, shops and residential units - in one integrated complex - will greatly contribute to the renaissance of central Providence.

- Providence Historic District Commission

P.H.D.C. is a supra-zoning organization established to enforce overlay zoning districts on College Hill and Broadway. Its members are mayoral appointees, endorsed by the City Council. The Commission would be of considerable importance to downtown were the City to use historic zones as a means of regulatory land use control in parts of the Downtown Planning District.

- Providence Industrial Development Corporation

Established in 1980, the P.I.D.C. is essentially a financing entity. Its Board is appointed by the Chamber and the City and therefore combines the development interests of both private and public sectors. Funding appropriation derives from the City, as well as E.B.A. and S.B.A. monies. The agency constructs financing packages for local firms, its focus being primarily upon industrial uses. P.I.D.C. uses self-perpetuating revolving funds and has 503 status.

- Providence Foundation

Established in 1974, the Foundation has charitable status and is a 501-C.3 agency. It raises its operating budget by soliciting contributions from the top fifty downtown corporations, while its tax status enables it to obtain supplementary funds from government agencies. The Foundation does not own land, nor does it make loans. Rather, its role is one of catalyst for downtown project initiation. The agency conducts feasibility studies and lobbies government agencies to this end.

- Providence Local Development Corporation

The P.L.D.C. has ten Board Members appointed by the Mayor who serve terms lasting two years. Block Grant funds are used for feasibility studies, revolving loan funding, a C.D.B.G. float, a 503 participatory scheme (in association with the Small Business Association), and in the initiation of major development projects. Its loan default rate is much lower than that of the private banks, running at approximately 4 percent. Total available assets run at \$2,800,000, a budget primarily applied to the elimination of blighted commercial properties.

- Providence Off-Street Public Parking

This is a state enabled, City instituted agency charged with the specific task of developing, revitalizing and managing the city's parking garages. P.O.S.P.P. uses revenue bond monies to fund its activities. Its chairperson is Thomas Moses, Deputy Director of D.P.D.

- Providence Preservation Society

This agency's focus is the preservation of buildings of architectural and historic significance. It has established a separate non-profit financing branch which offers loans, from a revolving loan program, for rehabilitating buildings. The P.P.S. is a private, non-profit membership organization with no public powers. However, its expertise and influential membership make it an effective lobbying mechanism.

- Providence Redevelopment Agency

The P.R.A. is the city's official redevelopment agency, created by state enabling legislation in the late 1940s. It has full public powers and has played a substantial role in the processes of urban renewal and urban revitalization in Providence. All land which the Agency condemns and acquires must be disposed of, according to statute, within five years.

- Washington Street Business Association

This private membership organization looks to the interests of the restaurant and retail uses on Washington Street. It is an information-sharing and lobbying group designed to stabilize the use composition and streetscape of this marginal thoroughfare.

6.3 With all these agencies, why create another?

Eighteen agencies, groups and committees might seem adequate to manage a city center the size of downtown Providence. Yet the principal recommendation of the

consultants in their Development Strategy is the creation of a new management entity. Clearly, in their assessment of the manner in which planning and management are currently executed, they found insufficient resources. Without specifying the reasons in their report, the consultants undoubtedly reached the same conclusions as the Director of Planning and Development with regard to the lack of coordination in the development of downtown. Too many of the agencies are 'dormant'. They simply provide a technical and informational resource, lobby for their own interests, or promote and market their own goods and services. A scan of Table 6.1 confirms the self-serving nature of many of the agencies.

It is evident, in concluding this chapter and Section I of the thesis, that further steps are required in the search for a fresh planning paradigm for downtown Providence. Having described the existing social and economic environments, reviewed the substantive elements of the Development Strategy, responded to some of its strengths and weaknesses, and analysed the existing planning milieu, the focus is now switched to the processes of generating a practical response, on the part of the City, to the Carr-Lynch-Levine report.

SECTION II

POLICY AND PROCESS ISSUES:

DEVELOPING PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT FOR

DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

CHAPTER 7
ON RECEIVING THE CARR-LYNCH-LEVINE STRATEGY:
THE CITY'S RESPONSE

"It is a matter of common observation that in Western democracies public administrations and policy analysts in general do largely limit their analyses to incremental or marginal differences in policies that are chosen to differ only incrementally. They do not do so, however, solely because they desperately need some way to simplify their problems; they also do so in order to be relevant. Democracies change their policies almost entirely through incremental adjustments. Policy does not move in leaps and bounds."

Charles E. Lindblom, 1964

7.1 The political context

In the City of Providence, policy most certainly does not move in "leaps and bounds". A history of fragmented interest groups with poor lines of communication has given rise to a mood of omniscient suspicion targeted directly at the Administration. Despite Paolino's efforts to foster at least the appearance of 'open government', the initial reaction of many key non-governmental actors in the downtown scene to new initiatives is that of doubt. At the very best, a 'wait and see' stance is elected in the face of new ideas emanating from City Hall.

Even before the arrival of the completed Downtown Providence Development Strategy, several criticisms were leveled at the Administration. Based upon a number of interviews conducted as background for this chapter, these criticisms can be summarized as follows:

1. The Strategy was seen in some quarters as an attempt by the Mayor to validate - by using supposedly objective consultants - new public attention in the historic city core. The Paolino family owns sizable property holdings in this area of downtown.
2. This was the first time in over twenty years that an Administration had commenced upon a new planning initiative in downtown Providence without consulting the private sector in respect to problem definition and goal setting.
3. The study process did not involve key downtown actors

from numerous, existing agencies whose involvement in the implementation of the Strategy and, in particular, the establishment of the Providence Company was deemed essential by the consultants in their report.

4. Input from the private sector was limited to information sought during interviews by Melvin Levine in the execution of his market analysis. Fact rather than opinion was the basis of this exercise. Criticism was therefore retrospective and reactive rather than used as an input device.
5. The consultants were hired without comment from the various downtown agencies, public and private, and their brief from the Mayor was not made public. In short, the downtown community did not know what this new initiative would involve, either during the plan generation stage or in the long-term.
6. The consultation allowed for in the two presentations given by Steven Carr and Melvin Levine were not sufficient as a forum for open debate. Copies of the Development Strategy were not available to individuals who attended and they were not prepared to respond to the brief overview given.
7. When the Strategy was presented at a meeting of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, Melvin Levine gave vague responses to the questions posed about the financing of the proposals and ignored suggestions that Tax Increment Financing was inappropriate in the

city. T.I.F. was the cornerstone of the implementation package he proposed in the document.

8. No representatives from the existing downtown residential community were invited to the presentations of the Strategy.

7.2 Rumblings of discontentment

Given the negative feelings noted above, the City was forced to consider the opinions of a wider audience. The presentations referred to in the above list took place amid a mixed press coverage. A series of articles in the Providence Journal by Dr. Chester Smolski, a professor of Urban Affairs at Rhode Island College, throughout the spring and early summer, were at the same time encouraging and skeptical. Acknowledged as a key public commentator on urban and planning affairs, Smolski feared that while the "time was ripe" for a fresh approach to downtown development, the private sector would need to be directly involved in policy making. Clearly, the City had failed to facilitate this throughout the planning process. Chapter 8 deals with the way the review process sought to overcome some of the inadequacies which emerged as a result of the closed process of plan development.

One more negative external factor which contributed toward the "summer of review" was a letter in the Providence Journal on June 5, 1986. The letter, by Ilse Politzer, a critic of the Paolino Administration, criticized the cost of

the Strategy (\$75,000) and denounced the Mayor's comment that "the plan has got some imagination to it". Politzer noted, that this "latter quality eludes me completely." As for the consultants' recommendations for increased office space and more parking garages, Politzer wrote, "There is no question that the various notables to whom the Mayor is going to submit plan and vehicle for review will approve of both. After all, they also approved of Westminster Mall, benches, planters, police booth, canopies and the Muzak of its beginnings."

By the time this piece appeared, the private sector was beginning to ruminate about whether the entire downtown plan was no more than a costly exercise in "planning in a vacuum". But the Department of Planning and Development was orchestrating its attempt to sell the Strategy: the Director himself took personal charge of the review process; members were appointed to a new Downtown Development Task Force; and a summer intern was appointed to conduct research and execute an opinion-seeking questionnaire on its behalf. The effectiveness of these measures are analyzed in the next chapter.

As the Mayor and his professional planning staff began to establish a considered response to the Strategy in terms of how best to apply it, a letter was received from Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society, Wendy Nicholas. As Table 6.1 shows, the PPS has no public powers, but it is a fierce lobbying organization and a firm exponent

of strict design review in the city. Nicholas expressed concern about modifying traditional cobble stone streets on the proposed upgraded downtown ring road and requested closer attention to design review, not only in terms of standards, but in respect to "other design review entities, to determine what makes them work well, or not."

Perhaps the key reservation noted by Nicholas was as follows, "The Providence Company requires substantial thought. We are concerned about the overlap in organizational jurisdiction. What's to be the role vis a vis the Providence Foundation? How to deal with the highly probable competition in marketing efforts between the Providence Company and the Capital Center Commission? How does the Downtown Providence Improvement Association fit in? To whom will the Board be accountable?" All these were direct and pertinent questions, raised by Nicholas even after she had read the report. It was apparent to the senior staff at the Department of Planning and Development that the private sector, the citizen groups and the non-profits would demand answers to these and other questions very soon. If answers were not provided, the Development Strategy would never be more than another shelved document.

7.3 "In-house" review of the Strategy

In his second 'State of the City Address', Mayor Paolino had instructed the Department of Planning and Development to report to him by the spring of 1986 with concrete policies

for downtown development. But the Carr-Lynch-Levine Strategy was not presented in satisfactory form until late April (the initial draft arrived in March) and the senior staff's attention to it came too close to the summer's local election campaign for anything 'concrete' to be decided upon. Instead, a review process was started. This served the dual purpose of addressing complaints from the private sector that downtown planning was being conducted behind closed doors, and postponing downtown initiatives (always unpopular in the neighborhoods) until after the November elections. The Administration was fairly comfortable with Paolino's standing, but former mayor, Vincent A. Cianci, had not denied he would run again. He was perceived as posing a potential threat to the incumbent, so stability - at least in the public forum - was the order of the day.

Arthur Markos, Department Director, sincerely believed that the plan offered genuine opportunities for coordinated downtown planning and attempted to make the process more accessible. But before allowing external comment and before the Strategy was released for public review, an in-house critique was conducted.

The general air was of disappointment. \$75,000 had been expended on consultants who came highly recommended. Yet, somehow their report was so generalized, so inoffensive, so bland, that it failed to ignite the imagination. Many of the recommendations were seen as generic planning solutions, unoriginal and boring. While the findings of the Levine

market analysis confirmed what property managers and developers had been saying for two years, there seemed to be little validation for adopting all the recommendations wholesale. This student, hired as a summer research intern, criticized the Strategy in several informal meetings with the Department Director, Arthur Markos, and the City Planner, Kathy Field, in a manner approximating to the statements made in Chapter 5 of this thesis. There was little hope of selling the report, as submitted, to the Administration and the business community.

While a personal response to the Strategy is presented in Chapter 5, the views of the Department were less severe in their negativity. Many of Steve Carr's design proposals were seen as useful suggestions for implementation. Indeed, several key factors were viewed by senior staff as deserving of serious consideration. But almost as many questions arose from the report as were answered by it. The key issues, as identified by the Department, might be summarized as follows:

1. Office growth rates - What should be the official public sector role with regard to encouraging and influencing office sector growth, the Foundry development and the Capital Center Project Area over and above circulation improvements? Will Carr-Lynch-Levine's absorption rates hold over the lengthy prescribed plan period?
2. Office development - Is there a need to change the City's stance from regulatory body to entrepreneurial body, must it facilitate rather than constrain? How

- can the outdated property tax structure be changed to induce absorption of vacant buildings? Would an immediate office marketing strategy be a year premature? Is the City's policy of placing historic preservation over development incentives a valid one?
3. Retail development - Why are people not shopping in central Providence? Where are they shopping? How does the City ensure security for shoppers? Is marketing the key? If management is the solution, what is the best form of management vehicle for central Providence?
 4. Attractions strategy - How can the City afford to maintain five attractions locations as proposed by the consultants? What private sector funds are available? Is there sufficient current and potential public interest to support them? What are the evening and late-night security issues? Which neighborhood associations might be able to help in their management? Would it be better to have a city-wide attractions and entertainments strategy, including Roger Williams Park?
 5. Design review - The totality and self-contained nature of Capital Center demanded site-specific design review: does the historic core demand the same? What are the specifics of the process, regulations and enforcement? Should design review include facades as well as set-backs, size, bulk, height etc.? How can the Providence Preservation Society, with its acknowledged expertise, serve downtown design review? What is the public

interest in design review - who should be empowered to represent the public's taste? Is design review really needed, given that nine out of ten developers comply with City recommendations about frontages? What American cities offer good examples of downtown design review? Should design review be part of or separate from the new Providence Company?

6. Downtown residential neighborhood - Can the City encourage the use of upper floors, as per the consultants' recommendations, for residential use? Would a consortium of existing property owners help to convert vacant and under-utilized structures to downtown housing? Is there structural compatibility of existing uses with proposed apartment-type uses? What is the target market: artists, students, yuppies? What about existing downtown dwellers?
7. Westminster Mall - Should the City immediately remove the unpopular streetscape aspects: benches, police booth, planters, lights? What would be the City's financial cost in opening the Mall to traffic? Would businesses benefit from the opening? Would new uses be encouraged or discouraged? What would be the immediate and long-term effects on businesses of prolonged infrastructure construction? What type of design should be used: should the City accept the consultants' 'Italianesque' example? Would vehicular congestion be a serious issue? Does

the Mall fail for reasons other than its pedestrian-only status? Are there other solutions?

8. Parking and circulation - Can the City afford to sacrifice more prime sites to parking garages? Is there a security issue? How many spaces will be needed given an unpredictable level of demand? Should on-street parking be made cheaper? What function does the existing ring road serve? If thousands of dollars are to be spent upgrading the ring road, what will be the overall benefits to downtown vehicular circulation? Is the parking/circulation problem in downtown Providence real or perceived?

These eight elements were deemed the most relevant (by the in-house Administration reviewers) to future downtown planning and management. However, the answers to most of the questions were too controversial for them to be transplanted into policy recommendations for the Mayor without professional and community input. Rather than concentrate on the substantive issues of the report and appear to be forcing policies upon downtown, the Department of Planning and Development had the wisdom to open up the process to external review. The eight elements were intended to be settled as firm policies before debate began on the necessity for a new planning and management entity.

It might be argued that this was all far too late to be generous and democratic. After all, the consultants had completed the report and the recommendations had been

submitted with little attention paid to those whose involvement would be needed to implement them (the private sector) or those who would be impacted (the wider downtown community). It was because of the potential 'participation' controversy, as well as the confusing diversity of recommendations in the report, that Arthur Markos instructed his research intern, under the supervision of the City Planner, to design a survey instrument to be circulated throughout the downtown district. With public input, it was hoped, the most practical policies would be more easily identified.

Further, the Mayor agreed to establish a Downtown Development Task Force (which, for political reasons, would report to Markos, not Paolino: Paolino did not want a standing committee on downtown issues associated directly with him by the media in a run-up to an election) of experienced professionals to assist the Department of Planning and Development in the process of policy generation. The consultants could not possibly have foreseen the level of controversy and conflict their report would generate. The outcome of the summer review period - the questionnaire execution and the Task Force meetings - is analyzed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8
PLAN REVIEW AND POLICY GENERATION

"If this thing is managed right, it could help to save downtown."

A questionnaire respondent, 1986

"My opinion is that another agency would be a waste of everyone's time."

A questionnaire respondent, 1986

"I cannot comment at this time because Carr has not been specific enough. I do not really know who would be responsible for this new agency. What happens if we have another RIHMFC on our hands?"

A questionnaire respondent, 1986

8.1 Confusion out of chaos

Unfortunately for all concerned, the summer which followed the City's dilemma in identifying how best to proceed with Carr-Lynch-Levine's report did not really clarify the future direction of downtown planning and management. A survey instrument, designed to tap wider public and private sector opinion, only served to reinforce impressions that the community was seriously divided on issues ranging from substantive matters (like opening up Westminster Mall to traffic) to policy matters (like the need for a new management agency). It should be clear to the reader that the reason why Chapters 9 and 10 are necessary at this stage (November, 1986) is that neither the City nor the Downtown Development Task Force has ventured concrete recommendations for implementing the desirable components of the Providence Downtown Development Strategy. The last two chapters of this thesis attempt to offer insight into what has worked in other American cities (Chapter 9) and, ultimately, to propose a theoretical framework for public-private partnership (Chapter 10).

This chapter catalogs the 'summer of review', June to October, 1986, in which the findings of a survey instrument and the deliberations of the Task Force served to institutionalize confusion out of the chaos which characterized the arrival of the Strategy in March. Confusion is certainly preferable to chaos, yet little has emerged in satisfaction of the City's need for a cohesive

approach to the downtown community. Meanwhile, development of the city's downtown fabric continues and the project-by-project, micro-policy approach of the Department of Planning and Development remains in place. The legacy of laissez-faire is alive and well in Providence.

8.2 The execution of the survey instrument

Under the guidance of the City Planner, Kathleen Field, this student was instructed by the Director of the Department of Planning and Development to formulate a questionnaire aimed at diverse downtown interest groups. Figure 8.1 represents the survey instrument in its final form. It was decided to keep responses entirely attitudinal in character, so that a hierarchy of priorities, in terms of which Strategy elements were desirable, would emerge. It was hoped that clear distinctions would emerge between those elements of the plan that would work and those which held little support. In order to refine the data analysis exercise, respondents were requested to note whether they were from public sector or private sector occupations (Question 14).

The questionnaire's layout was designed so as not to emphasize one element over any other. Each section of the Carr-Lynch-Levine report was included for comment. Further, a blank form was attached to the questionnaire so that detailed criticism and review could be offered by each individual. The survey was executed on a mail-back basis and, perhaps because of the low response rate which typifies

FIGURE 8.1

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

QUESTIONNAIRE: TO SOLICIT OPINIONS AND COMMENTS (Circle Answers)

1. What is your overall reaction to the Providence Development Strategy?

ENTHUSIASTIC POSITIVE NEUTRAL NEGATIVE DISAPPOINTED

2. What do you think are the most exciting elements of the Strategy?

- a. The creation of a Downtown neighborhood
- b. The re-opening of Westminster Mall
- c. Increased retail/restaurant/entertainment activities
- d. Increased employment potential
- e. Increased Class 'A' office space
- f. Improved city image
- g. Increased utilization of Downtown during weekends and evenings
- h. Special events program
- i. Other (Please note other elements)

3. Do you think that the Providence Company (a quasi-public entity) will:

- a. Be a viable vehicle for implementation of the Strategy? YES/NO
- b. Have powers that are appropriate to its responsibility? YES/NO
- c. Have a financing scheme adequate to fund the Strategy? YES/NO

4. The Report calls for a Design Review Committee which would review and approve (according to an established set of procedures and guidelines) major development plans. Do you agree that the City should establish such a Committee? YES/NO

5. Do you agree with the concept of Tax Increment Financing as proposed in the Strategy for the Providence Business District? YES/NO

6. Do you also agree with the concept of a Special Assessment District? YES/NO

7. Do you agree that the partial re-opening of Westminster Mall is an appropriate solution to the lack of activity during off-peak hours? YES/NO

FIGURE 8.1 cont.

8. Do you think that the Housing Strategy, which assumes an income threshold of \$35,000/year to purchase/rent, will:
- a. Create a viable Downtown neighborhood? YES/NO
 - b. Generate evening and weekend activity? YES/NO
9. Do you think that the emphasis on physical and street design improvements is appropriate for the Strategy's successful implementation? YES/NO
10. What is your opinion of the Business District's parking problem?
- a. Too expensive
 - b. Insufficient spaces
 - c. Too far from destination
 - d. Problem is perceived, not real
 - e. Other _____
11. What is your reaction to the following Attractions Strategies?:
(Use this code: a = Enthusiastic, b = Positive, c = Neutral, d = Negative, e = Disappointed)
- a. Improved streetscapes and festival lighting _____
 - b. Entertainment Center linking Westminster Mall to Washington St. _____
 - c. Performance facility at Cathedral Square _____
 - d. Soho-type artistic neighborhood _____
 - e. Waterfront activities district _____
 - f. Kennedy Plaza performance facilities _____
12. Downtown development is perceived as responding to an increasing demand. Do you think Providence development could support a linkage scheme downtown at this time? YES/NO
13. For our files, please would you check your occupation classification:
- Public Official _____ Developer _____ Banking/Finance _____
Educator _____ Private Professional Service _____
Downtown Business _____ Other (please describe) _____
14. Thank you for filling out this questionnaire. We would appreciate any additional comments you might have on the various aspects of the Providence Development Strategy, as well as other elements which you believe to be vital to successful downtown development. If you choose to sign below, it will offer us an opportunity to get back to you for further discussion. Please use the attached Comment Sheet.
15. This questionnaire will be used by the Department of Planning and Development as it makes recommendations to the Mayor. Please return it within one week to: Mark Motte, c/o Department of Planning and Development, Third Floor, 55 Eddy Street, Providence, RI 02903.

SIGNATURE (Optional) _____
ADDRESS/PHONE # _____

such a method, only eight percent (25 responses) of the 300 forms distributed were returned to the Department. Naturally, the questionnaire could only be sent to those individuals who had been given access to the Development Strategy. This limited the survey sample to people who had attended the two presentations of the Strategy at City Hall by the consultants and those who had been sent copies of the Strategy upon request. The former group were all invited guests (the presentations, while termed 'public meetings', were not advertised), while the second group were almost exclusively from the private sector (mostly members of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce). The consultation of the downtown community was therefore extremely limited in scope and, as is described below, no members of the residential community were invited to comment. Representation from the small businesses, which dominate downtown land use, was also nominal.

A major criticism of the questionnaire ventured by one member of the Chamber was, "Who can disagree with Mom, the Flag and apple pie?". In effect, all the questions were posed to elicit favorable responses: for example, who could disagree with the substance of the list in Question 2? What many people noted was that, while the substantive issues were almost all desirable, the means of their implementation was not. The methods by which creating a downtown neighborhood would be achieved would bring far greater comment than merely asking whether a downtown neighborhood was desirable.

8.3 The findings of the survey instrument

Figure 8.2 summarizes the responses to the questionnaire. For the purposes of this analysis, only general patterns in the responses are deemed relevant (once the Task Force had been appointed, the views of the community were rarely mentioned). Of interest, though, are those points which were favored by the sample population, but were overlooked by the Task Force in its discussions.

An overwhelming majority of respondents favored the elements listed in Question 2. Only the re-opening of Westminster Mall and the special events program were considered undesirable. In their comments, respondents from both the public and private sectors felt that opening the Mall was an irrelevance and not the solution to its under-utilization. Rather, more imaginative service and goods provision was seen as the key. Special events were labeled as a sub-issue to downtown revitalization: a simple device, but insufficient to have a lasting effect.

The concept of a new management agency (Question 3) was favored approximately two to one, but clearly the consultants' model was not the appropriate vehicle: the sample was split half-and-half as to whether the agency's powers, as proposed, were adequate and as to whether the financing scheme was right for Providence. At the time of the survey execution (early June), there was considerable controversy surrounding the consultants' proposal and many

FIGURE 8.2

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>					
	Enthusiastic	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Disappointed	
1	3	12	5	4	1	
2	(a) 14	(b) 5	(c) 21	(d) 16	(e) 19	
	(f) 22	(g) 16	(h) 7	(i) 0		
3	(a) YES 16	NO 9				
	(b) YES 12	NO 13				
	(c) YES 8	NO 7				
4	YES 8	NO 17				
5	YES 9	NO 11				
6	YES 3	NO 13				
7	YES 6	NO 18				
8	(a) YES 13	NO 8				
	(b) YES 12	NO 5				
9	YES 16	NO 6				
10	(a) 6	(b) 12	(c) 7	(d) 11		
11	Enthusiastic Positive Neutral Negative Disappointed					
	(a)	2	6	9	3	3
	(b)	4	10	6	4	1
	(c)	0	0	12	13	0
	(d)	0	7	16	1	1
	(e)	5	8	8	4	0
	(f)	0	3	15	5	2
12	YES 3	NO 20				

people were not clear about the issues. This might explain the large number of people who did not respond to Question 3.c. Many simply did not understand the financing proposals.

Questions 4 through 7, concerning the fractious issues of partial re-opening of the Mall at certain hours, stricter institutionalized design review, and the two alternative methods of downtown district financing (Tax Increment Financing and Special Assessment) were unpopular with an overwhelming majority of respondents. One hundred percent of realtors, business owners, private professionals, developers and bankers/financiers were opposed to the financing scheme as proposed in the report. Responses to Question 12 concerning the linkage scheme (which would permit a proportion of monies levied in a downtown district to be spent on neighborhood improvements) also met with overwhelming opposition. These responses reflect the extreme conservatism of the city and illustrate the difficulty of initiating innovative planning and management techniques.

Housing was hardly a key issue among this selective sample population, but a majority favored the number-crunching of Melvin Levine. Clearly, if prime land was to be designated for residential use, profitability for developers was essential. The \$35,000 household income threshold for access to the future downtown residential market (Question 8) was seen as inevitable rather than desirable. The outcome of this point might have been somewhat different had existing tenants and owner-occupiers been surveyed. The yuppification

of downtown Providence has not yet occurred, but if the residential policies of the consultants are adopted, developers will ensure that it does.

The excellent physical and street design proposals in the report won the support of a majority of respondents (Question 9). In fact, few criticisms of Steve Carr's urban design drawings have since been made. Many commented that the illustrations in the report show the vast potential to be unlocked in future downtown development. The drawings are particularly popular with the historic preservation lobby. Not so the parking recommendations. The preservationists and public sector employees unanimously decided that parking was a 'perceived' problem in the downtown area. Businessmen, as might be expected, felt that parking facilities were too distant from their properties and that spaces were too few in number. As the summary responses to Question 10 illustrate, however, there is considerable confusion as to what the problem is (if indeed there is one). As one public official noted, "There is always space if you are prepared to pay \$3.50 and walk a bit... It's still much cheaper than New York and Boston."

Elements of the Attractions Strategy were the subject of Question 11. Surprisingly, very few respondents had much enthusiasm for any of them. Once again, the entertainment and 'glamor' aspects of the report were seen as peripheral to the central questions of economic development, greater diversity in profitable land use, and the manner or means of

implementation. The most popular attractions were the Art Factory entertainment complex (designed to link Westminster Mall with Washington Street) and the Waterfront activities district (already much acclaimed in the form of William Warner's Providence Waterfront Plan). The other centers were regarded as insignificant or undesirable. The people of Providence, unlike the outside consultants, have always known that the disastrous urban design exercise at Cathedral Square will never amount to more than a picturesque desert.

Few real surprises. Little consensus. Poor community representation. No opinions sought about implementation. In short, the questionnaire was of little help to the City and was later to be ignored by the Task Force. A questionnaire is usually a method of identifying public opinion and gaining valid community input to policies. This questionnaire achieved neither.

8.4 The appointment of a Task Force

The Downtown Development Task Force was appointed by Mayor Joseph. R. Paolino, Jr. on the advice of his Director of Planning and Development. The Mayor wanted strong representation from the business community with particular emphasis on the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce. Apart from the three senior staff of the Department of Planning and Development (Arthur Markos, Thomas Moses and Kathleen Field), there were eighteen appointees. Their names and positions are furnished in Figure 8.3. The profile of

FIGURE 8.3

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

DPD STAFF MEMBERS - ARTHUR MARKOS, DIRECTOR
THOMAS MOSES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KATHLEEN FIELD, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

OTHER MEMBERS

AMATO, Richard J.
President
Kates Properties Management Co., Inc.
290 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
751-9600

CARNEY, H. Jay
Senior Vice President
Claremont Development Co.
175 Federal Street
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 722-0900

DALE, Terry
Executive Director
Greater Providence Convention & Visitors Bureau
30 Exchange Terrace
Providence, RI 02903
274-1636

DOYLE, Robert
Senior Vice President
Old Stone Development Corp.
1 Old Stone Square
Providence, RI 02903
278-2045

FAIRCHILD, James
Executive Director
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce
30 Exchange Terrace
Providence, RI 02903
521-5000

FELDMAN, Melvin
Adjunct Professor of Urban Studies
Brown University
Box 1896, Providence, RI 02912
863-1000

FRANCIS, Charles
President
Ryan Elliott & Co. of Rhode Island, Inc.
187 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
331-0350

FIGURE 8.3 cont.

GILBANE, Robert
Gilbane Building Company
7 Jackson Walkway
Providence, RI 02903
456-5890

HALL, Charlene
Executive Director
Capital Center Project
30 Exchange Terrace
Providence, RI 02903
274-8200

HENDERSON, John
Adler, Pollock and Sheehan
2300 Hospital Trust Tower
Providence, RI 02903
274-7200

KUMEKAWA, Glenn
Inter-governmental Policy Analysis Program
The University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881
792-1000

LANGEN, E. Timothy
Managing Director
Trinity Square Repertory Theater
201 Washington Street
Providence, RI 02903
521-1100

MAURO, Edmund M., Jr.
Chairman
Providence Redevelopment Authority
International Supply Company
215 Niantic Avenue
Cranston, RI 02907
944-1600

NICHOLAS, Wendy
Executive Director
Providence Preservation Society
24 Meeting Street
Providence, RI 02906
831-7440

O'DONNELL, Charles
191~~2~~ Fleet Bank Building
Providence, RI 02903
421-1550

FIGURE 8.3 cont.

SARLES, Jay
Executive Vice President
Fleet Financial Group
111 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
278-6000

SHERMAN, Jane B.
Chairperson,
City Planning Commission
254 Irving Avenue
Providence, RI 02906
861-3313

SHUTTE, Thomas
President
Rhode Island School of Design
2 College Street
Providence, RI 02903
331-3511

participants is interesting because there are no planners (other than the in-house personnel), but several bankers and developers. The profile is as follows:

In-house personnel	3
Educators	3
Property managers	1
Developers	3
Bankers/financiers	3
Academics	3
Public officials	2
Historic preservationists	1
Lawyers	1
Entertainment Managers	1

There is an obvious bias toward the private sector, reflecting the stance of the Strategy in respect to economic development, but also the Mayor's personal involvement with real estate and the acknowledged dominance of the private sector in the affairs of downtown (which, after all, is a commercial district). However, there were no invitees from the neighborhood organizations, citizen groups, minority groups, tenant groups, the numerous non-profits or other City agencies. The Strategy was couched in terms which were to incur minimal costs to the City, with great emphasis placed upon capital investment from the private sector. Here, then, was a forum, not only in which the idea of a new downtown plan could be sold, but in which with the needs of the private sector could be identified and a plan tailored

accordingly with direct private involvement. The City recognized that it did not have the funds to 'go it alone'. The Strategy recognized this (indeed, the Carr-Lynch-Levine Strategy was unique in the history of Providence planning in that it assumed the availability of neither state nor federal funds). The Task Force was seen by the City as the only means by which a workable plan and a successful implementation vehicle could be generated.

8.5 The deliberations of the Task Force

According to what was anticipated to be only a summer-long agenda, the Task Force was scheduled to meet on four occasions between July 15 and September 9, 1986 (Figure 8.4). The consultants had presented their findings to two invited assemblies of various downtown organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, in early June and early July. Feedback from the post-presentation questionnaire had been analyzed for submission to the Task Force by mid-July. Meetings of senior departmental staff would summarize the Task Force's findings and provide policy documents for the Mayor by mid-September, 1986. The process, as defined in Figure 8.4, would move from response and feedback mechanisms, via input devices, to final policy generation from June 1 to September 20. With the agenda circulated among appointed members, the initial Task Force meeting took place on July 15.

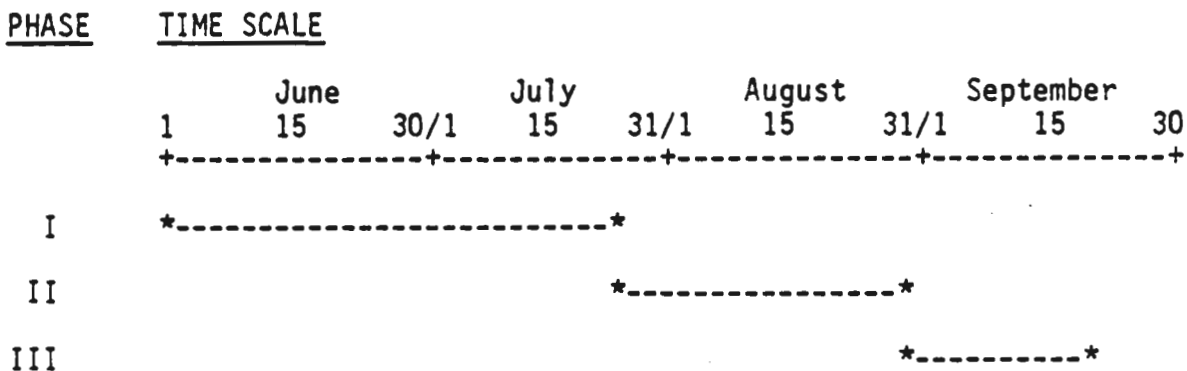
It would be easy to condemn this process as insular and undemocratic, but when compared to the history of urban

FIGURE 8.4
REVIEW OF PROVIDENCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

ATTENTION: TASK FORCE PARTICIPANTS

<u>PROPOSED DATE</u>	<u>MEETING</u>
PHASE 1. RESPONSE AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS	
6/4	Presentation by Melvin Levine (Consultant) and Department of Planning and Development to the Providence Foundation
7/1	Presentation by Carr, Lynch and Melvin Levine (Consultants) to City Council, Urban Renewal Committee, Historic District Commission, Redevelopment Agency, Providence Preservation Society, Planning Commission
7/15	TASK FORCE - Initial meeting to discuss approach to the Strategy, to study its major elements, and to review feedback from first presentations and questionnaires
PHASE II. POLICY INPUT	
7/29	TASK FORCE - Second meeting to critique the Strategy, to review questionnaire feedback and to establish most positive, workable elements
8/19	Department of Planning and Development Staff Meeting - To initiate policy in respect to adoption of preferred Strategy elements
8/22	TASK FORCE - Third meeting to establish final structure of Strategy with particular emphasis on means of implementation, the Providence Company, financing, and the feasibility of a Downtown Neighborhood as a catalyst for increasing market demand
PHASE III. POLICY GENERATION	
8/29	Department of Planning and Development Staff Meeting - To define policies and proposals to be adopted
9/4	Completion of First Draft of downtown development proposals
9/9	TASK FORCE - Fourth meeting to obtain final input on proposals and policy determination
9/12	Department of Planning and Development Staff Meeting - Finalization of proposals for Providence Development Strategy
9/17	Submission of proposals to the Mayor

FIGURE 8.4 cont.



PHASE I. RESPONSE AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

This initial period will involve a thorough investigation into the validity of the Strategy as a 'downtown plan', with emphasis upon whether the integration of its many elements renders it a workable document. The consultants' report will be examined in the light of its strengths and weaknesses as perceived by yourself and the other Task Force participants. It is anticipated that a diverse range of views will be expressed, but participants are encouraged to identify those issues which directly relate to the practicality of the plan - will it fly? If not, why not? Which elements have the greatest strengths...and deepest flaws? Attention will be paid in the first meeting of the Task Force to the key components of the Strategy: the establishment of the Providence Company; the development of Class 'A' office space; the Attractions Strategy; and the development of a 'Downtown Neighborhood'.

PHASE II. POLICY INPUT

By this stage, some consensus will have been reached in respect to those areas of the Strategy most actively to be emphasized and supported. While the first meeting will have established an approach to the Strategy, a more detailed critique (including the policy, planning and financial implications) is now appropriate. Responses from the presentations and the findings of the questionnaire (see example enclosed) will provide primary feedback data from both the public and private sectors. At this time, the Task Force should help to establish the most positive, workable elements of the Strategy in order that the Department of Planning and Development might initiate policy concerning the adoption of preferred plans.

PHASE III. POLICY GENERATION

The end of the summer months will mark the coalescing of a wide range of opinions into a policy document for the consideration of the Mayor. The Task Force will assist the Department of Planning and Development in defining the policies and proposals to be selected for final recommendation. Again, participants are asked to look to the Providence Company (its accountability and financing, in particular), office space, attractions, housing and each sub-category of the planning scheme. It is hoped that the Director of Planning and Development will be able to make his submission to the Mayor by mid-September, 1986.

renewal, at least a considered approach was now being taken to the direction and potential impacts of fresh initiatives. An advisory body of acknowledged experts and powerful downtown actors had been assembled and what they recommended would be of considerable influence upon the Mayor as he attempted to set downtown policy for his new term (Paolino was re-elected by a resounding majority in November, 1986).

The Task Force was presented with individual agendas for each of its meetings. None of these was adhered to. It was clear that there existed factions within the group, some members lobbying strongly in favor of a new City initiative, others cynical about the timing of the plan. The first two meetings produced nothing in the way of concrete proposals and after the third meeting, a period of nearly three months passed before the Task Force met again. The fourth meeting occurred on December 3, 1986. Over an hour was spent arguing over the accuracy of minutes taken by Arthur Markos at the third. By the end of the meeting, a broad consensus had been built around many of the Strategy's substantive elements (as described in Chapter 4), but the issue of the Providence Company was raised only briefly.

Charles Francis of Ryan Elliot Corporation, a development firm, informed members that the timing of a new agency was quite wrong, given the current downtown environment. The Task Force decided to postpone discussions regarding the implementation vehicle until 1987. Richard Amato, President of Kates Properties, a property management

firm headquartered on Westminster Mall, questioned the Mayor's interest in the findings of the Task Force. In an article in the Providence Journal on Saturday 30 November, 1986, Paolino indicated that he was going to re-open Westminster Mall and that he did not need an advisory panel to tell him whether that was right or not. The very validity of the Task Force was brought into question and Arthur Markos, the Chairman, was forced to cite examples of the "Mayor's sincere interest" in order to re-affirm the panel's sense of purpose.

The points which did win almost unanimous approval in the last two Task Force meetings are as follows:

1. The Task Force will support efforts to bring a multi-use, retail development (similar to that previously proposed for the Outlet Building) to downtown Providence.
2. Developing and marketing office space is premature.
3. A private sector initiative along the lines of the Carr-Lynch-Levine Attractions Strategy should be encouraged.
4. Design Review is desirable, but the Task Force is not qualified to make specific proposals. For the long-term, coordinated design review is desirable.
5. A residential neighborhood depends solely on supply and demand. Current land values do not permit the supply of residences at a cost which would be affordable to the type of individual/family who

would wish to locate downtown.

6. The majority sentiment is to leave Westminster Mall closed to vehicular traffic at all times.
7. The ring road will need more than merely improved signage to work effectively. Some form of physical improvements will be necessary.
8. The current political, economic and inter-agency environments do not, at present, indicate that a new institutionalized management vehicle would be appropriate.

Because the Task Force has been unable to progress beyond the establishment of generalized agreement with certain of Carr-Lynch-Levine's recommendations, this thesis proceeds with an analysis of the experiences of other American cities in downtown development and, finally, with proposals for a new public-private partnership for downtown Providence. Reservations about its success are expected. Given the events of the spring, summer and now the fall of 1986, there appears to be little hope of exacting a new policy from City Hall. If the Administration decides to proceed, despite opposition, the Providence Company will almost certainly die a swift death. "The time is ripe", wrote Chester Smolski. It is also wrong.

CHAPTER 9
ALTERNATIVES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT:
CASE STUDIES IN DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

"Anyone who has ridden a bicycle built for two knows that while the balance of effort may shift back and forth, one partner coasting while the other pedals on, long distances can be covered only by joint and sustained effort."

Katherine Lyall, 1982

9.1 Introduction

"Cities have an air of permanence which is both real and illusory. Because they are built of concrete and steel, their physical forms display the layers of time... But cities have a social and economic dynamism which continually remakes them, sometimes very quickly." (Susan S. Fainstein et al, 1983). Cities are a complex mosaic of social and economic forces which confront the urban planner in a tangled web of confusing trends, the outcomes of which are a continual test of his skills as researcher, goal-setter and policy generator. Because there exist these "illusory" qualities to the more visible physical fabric of the city, the planner can only succeed in the manner of his intervention by understanding the relationships between the marketplace and the impact of his actions: existing milieu versus potential environment; current power-base versus more equitable brokerage; public over private (or more realistically, public and private) rather than public versus private.

The nature of the urban marketplace is inherently conflictual, a battle of interest groups, of coalitions, and of social groups, each vying for optimal satisfaction and individual goal attainment. In complying with his task of generating policy does the planner, as he has done traditionally, side with those forces best able to preserve the status quo, or does he innovate and attempt to find a level of convergence between the opposing camps of diverse interests, private and public? Intervention is the only

means of effecting change. Intervention is therefore controversial. It demands of some the surrendering of power and, of others, the humility to wield new power equitably. Guarantees of equity are never cast in stone, so in re-defining the means and extent of intervention, the planner must find a vehicle whose constitution sustains the intent of goals over a prolonged period.

This chapter catalogues the attempts of planners and their political mentors to institutionalize positive working relationships between historically fractious elements in downtown communities. In seeking a broader definition of 'public interest' and in bringing private and public groups into one fold, urban municipalities have strived to achieve a level of cooperation never before associated with central city politics. With the common goals of bringing economic growth and people back to the urban core, downtown planning and management entities are attempting to bring life back to the heart of the American city. The final chapter in this Research Project analyzes the effectiveness of the efforts made in the case histories described below. Has there been true convergence of interests or has the concept of 'public interest' been compromised in the name of advancing the cause of free market economics? Have goals been set in order to permit the status quo to prevail in an environment which has developed to the detriment of its long term good health?

9.2 Public-private partnership: an overview

The problems and opportunities of cities have long been matters of keen interest to the federal government. The response to them has ranged from almost total laissez-faire to intense public subsidization. The position of this thesis holds that, despite decades of national government intervention, little is actually known, by those who coin national urban policy, about decision-making processes within cities because most decisions are made by local leaders. While cities do exhibit similar traits (for example, white flight, suburbanization, inner city decay and ghettoization of minorities), the response of local politicians has varied dramatically from one urban area to every other.

The growth and visibility of the federal government obscured the expansion of local government. With economic booms in the 1950s and 1960s, suburban growth, which had been noticeable even in the inter-war years, suddenly exploded. New local governments were formed in the suburbs to provide roads and schools to support growing populations at the urban fringes. As a consequence, the traditional central cities were drained of middle class individuals, jobs and tax bases and, at the same time, were filled with a poorer population of rural migrants who were predominantly black. Successive federal administrations responded to the resultant problems of poverty, health, education, unemployment and public safety in a manner which was impressive more for its magnitude than its relevance.

Seemingly, not even the scope of federal programs was ever entirely adequate to follow through with problem-solving.

Federal policy, by its very nature, is applied at the national level - one rule for all. Yet the interpretation of the intent of federal urban policy, the implementation of federal programs, and the expenditure of federal funds are expedited by local mechanisms. To venture that areal disparities in socio-economic conditions have been compounded by similar disparities in the wisdom of local urban policies would be to overwork an already hackneyed truth. But increasingly city administrations are having to look to their own resources - both technical and financial - in grappling with continued inner city decline. Unable to rely upon federal revenue sharing, with the contraction of the CDBG and UDAG programs, local administrations are looking to the strengths of the private sector for collaborative efforts in urban revitalization.

Much research has been conducted with regard to the various aspects of urban society, including its social structure, political institutions, economic development, and government management. Many of the studies undertaken in the 1960s concentrated on the social factors underlying urban decline. Much of the work carried out in the 1970s focused on economic forces. The 1980s have brought such terms as 'efficiency', 'practicality', and 'running the town like a business' to the fore. There is a dilemma here in that governments in capitalist societies carry out residual

functions. Residual, that is, because they are those functions which will not produce a profit and are therefore ignored by the private sector. But the resounding victory of Proposition 13 in California in 1978 dramatized a nationwide mood swing in public opinion. Government, it was believed, was too expensive. Also in 1978, federal grants to state and local governments ceased their historic climb and began instead to decline. The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and the near unanimity in Congress in 1981 in favor of restraining federal budget growth confirmed the change in public mood.

Getting a return on the dollar is today becoming a priority in many areas which have fallen to the public domain: education, social services, infrastructure provision, and neighborhood development. Grants are being supplanted by loans which are repayable to the municipality with interest. Per pupil cost is the bottom line in educational subsidization. Sewers and mains water supplies are driven first through those areas with economically viable uses hungry for improved infrastructure. As the new, high technology industries become more and more 'footloose', municipalities must continually bow to their requisites (for fear of losing them to more attractive towns at the next exit on the interstate). With federal government urban policy contracting and private industry free to take its jobs where it pleases, how does local government reconcile its duty to preserve an acceptable level of living for its citizens with

the hostile reality of current economic circumstances?

Persuasion is a key factor. By coaxing the private sector to behave in a manner conducive to the wider public interest, while convincing business that there are benefits to be derived from a stable downtown, a municipality can overcome many of the financial constraints to achieving growth. Injections of capital come from private rather than public sources. There has always been a concern, on the part of local governments, that specialized but interdependent business activities have not automatically integrated themselves into a smoothly functioning system, either within urban regions or within the citywide economy. Private goals are geared to profit, not public well being.

It is natural that local government, the people's expression of collective action, should today be called upon to respond to economic fragmentation as manifested in the city core. The same pragmatic tradition that has guided urban organization for a hundred years must now respond to a federal policy vacuum in the inner city environment. A rethinking of the roles and relationships of the public and private sectors must come from the public sector. The private sector will happily go on making profits for itself because profit is its only policy.

Whether the vehicle for finding common ground between diverse urban interests is private, public, profit, non-profit, self-help, volunteer, or a combination of these, cities are realizing the need to take the first step in

initiating a new order. They are then taking a step back and allowing new organizations to act as catalysts for downtown change.

9.3 The sample of cities

The research for this chapter was consciously biased toward those downtown organizations which appear to have good track records. The purpose of this thesis is to make recommendations for a new management entity or public-private relationship for downtown Providence. While one would hope to avoid the pitfalls encountered by less successful agencies, those which have achieved measurable success offer excellent models upon which a Rhode Island prototype might be based.

The International Downtown Executives Association publishes a list of what it calls 'Downtown Improvement Organizations' (1981). Its most recent enumeration found 81 agencies in cities as diverse as El Paso, Texas and Fargo, North Dakota. Table 9.1 shows that 88 percent of them dealt with planning and development issues, while Table 9.2 illustrates that a three-way split occurs between those agencies which are city adjuncts, those which are non-profits and those which are independent 501-C.3 organizations. The information published by the International Downtown Executives Association served as a guide in identifying those case studies most pertinent to formulating a partnership for Providence.

TABLE 9.1
PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF ORGANIZATION

<u>Population Category</u>	<u>Planning & Development</u>	<u>Promotion</u>	<u>Parking</u>
Less than 50,000	88 %	12 %	0 %
50,000-99,999	69	23	8
100,000-149,999	88	0	12
150,000-249,999	100	0	0
250,000-499,999	93	7	0
500,000-one million	83	17	0
Over 1 million	100	0	0
AVERAGE FOR ALL CATEGORIES	88 %	10 %	2 %

Source: International Downtown Executives Association, 1981

TABLE 9.2
TAX STATUS OF ORGANIZATION

Status	Population Category					
	Less than 50,000	50,000- 99,999	100,000- 149,999	150,000- 249,999	250,000- 499,999	Over 500,000
Non-Profit	13 %	17 %	0 %	27 %	20 %	12 %
Non-Profit Taxable	0	17	0	0	0	6
Exempt	33	8	50	18	27	6
For Profit	0	0	17	9	0	0
501 (c) (3)	20	17	0	18	7	24
501 (c) (4)	7	17	17	18	7	6
501 (c) (6)	7	8	17	9	40	35
City Agency	13	17	0	0	0	6
Taxing Authority	7	0	0	0	0	6

AVERAGE FOR ALL CATEGORIES:	Non-Profit	16 %
	Non-Profit Taxable	4
	Exempt	21
	For Profit	7
	501 (c) (3)	16
	501 (c) (4)	11
	501 (c) (6)	21
	City Agency	8
	Taxing Authority	3

Source: International Downtown Executives Association, 1981

The four cities selected are Baltimore, Maryland, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Atlanta, Georgia, and Portland, Oregon. Unique in their geographic locations, their population sizes, their industrial and demographic histories, and the form taken by their downtown revitalization and management efforts, each has been successful in coordinating the public and private sectors to promote growth.

The Baltimore Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA), a group of concerned citizens wishing to improve the quality of life in downtown neighborhoods (including James Rouse), was responsible for stimulating business interest in establishing the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) which went on to play a key role in downtown revitalization. In 1957, the GBC and its offshoot, the Committee for Downtown, jointly raised \$150,000 and contracted a professional planning group for the development of a master plan for downtown renewal. The result was the much-vaunted Charles Center Project.

Pittsburgh's 'Renaissance I' period owes its origins and support to the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD). The ACCD provided the agenda, planning and capacity that evolved into the projects of Renaissance I and, more recently, the continuation of the scheme in the form of Renaissance II.

The third case study describes how an active Chamber of Commerce provided powerful leadership as reflected, for example, in the enormously successful Forward Atlanta program, an advertising campaign to attract business to

Atlanta. In the 1970s, initiative shifted to Central Atlanta Progress (CAP), a group composed of the city's top business executives, which has been instrumental in sustaining growth in that city.

Portland is perhaps the most unique of the case studies in the unusually active role played by neighborhood organizations. It was the lack of an organized downtown business group that spawned the neighborhoods into action and the development of the 1972 downtown plan. The revisions of the plan up to this time are noteworthy for the high degree of public participation permitted.

In selecting the four communities, it is hoped that a wide range of elements will emerge as contributing to the success of a prototypical management agency. Several key factors were looked for in estimating the likelihood of the case studies to contribute to planning practices in other cities. These might be summarized as common elements of local initiative (it should be reiterated that these agencies come from local and not federal origins): a positive civic culture; a realistic and commonly accepted vision of the community; effective pre-existing building-block agencies; a network among key groups and actors which promotes communication of ideas; the nurturing of entrepreneurs; and continuity of policy from the inception of a strategy and its implementation vehicle up to the point when its role is clearly defined and operational.

9.4 Public-private partnership in Baltimore, Maryland

The history of public-private partnerships in Baltimore goes back more than thirty years and spans a large number of projects, ranging from economic development to housing rehabilitation. The success of these efforts can be traced back to the work of two organizations, the Citizens' Planning and Housing Association and the Greater Baltimore Committee.

After spending decades in the shadow of the nation's capital, Baltimore is beginning to emerge as a vibrant city in its own right. National publicity surrounding the Inner Harbor renovation and Harborplace has given the city a clear identity and independent status. Baltimore is perceived by its planners as a city of character; a success story worth telling in other cities.

In Baltimore most civic and private entrepreneurial leaders can trace their expertise back to membership in a single non-profit organization, the Citizens' Planning and Housing Association (CPHA). While its initial foundation came in 1941 (as a response to city health issues), its potential was only fully realized during the social turmoil of the 1960s when inner cities were rioting against social injustice. From its inception, the body viewed itself as a group of concerned citizens intent upon improving the quality of residential neighborhoods through the use of volunteer action. CPHA proceeded to set up more than 150 voluntary neighborhood improvement associations throughout the city.

From humble clean-up and fix-up efforts, these associations grew into well-coordinated advocacy groups.

The mid-1950s saw outcries from the wider city population about alleged corruption among civic officials. As a response, the City administration agreed to greater community participation in the operations of the Housing Authority and the Redevelopment Agency; the two bodies were merged into the Baltimore Urban Redevelopment and Housing Agency (BURHA), a largely volunteer group of professionals and advocates founded in 1957. The consolidation of all the city's redevelopment and physical development resources into one agency was an unprecedented step in American cities. But the administration went further - the Department of Public Works was later added to BURHA to form the present-day Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). HCD is an extremely powerful and effective agency which fostered high standards of technical and professional expertise. Many of its early pioneers went on to work as senior officials for the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This strong background of two decades of public spirited citywide planning and development policies has created a "stability and unity of purpose within the public sector which has undoubtedly been a key factor in the successful pursuit, with substantial private sector participation, of long-range development goals" (Fosler and Berger, 1982).

CPHA's active support for the creation of a single,

integrated development agency, HCD, carried over into establishing a political consensus for the need for a specialized branch dealing solely with downtown issues. The CPHA, together with HCD, set the stage for genuine public-private partnerships in the 1970s and 1980s. Their vehicle was the Greater Baltimore Committee which today looks beyond the problems of housing and community affairs to the wider issues of central city commercial development and downtown revitalization.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) has been the agency responsible for mobilizing business initiative in support of downtown renewal efforts. However, bringing its goals to fruition took several years, despite the presence on its board of such business success-stories as Willard Rouse, Robert Levi and Guy Hooday. The GBC's own records (1980) state: "Reactions from the business community ranged from disinterest to outright opposition. Some expressed the concern that the proposed organization would duplicate the Association of Commerce (the local Chamber of Commerce)... The local press also greeted the rumors of the new group with skepticism."

The new organization was intended as an elite group consisting of the chief executive officers of the one hundred largest corporations in the Baltimore Metropolitan area. No specific statement of philosophy was issued, but a pragmatic purpose was set down: "GBC will function as a citizen arm of the government... it could provide the necessary business and

financial expertise to help implement city projects; it could provide accurate and complete information on their necessity through surveys and studies and overcome opposition; finally, it would exert whatever possible pressure on the government to get approval for necessary improvements... Our watchword should be 'action now'" (Greater Baltimore Committee, 1980).

The newly formed GBC quickly settled on a priority agenda which unashamedly focused on economic development issues: transportation improvements, port development and a new Civic Center. Of a lower priority were pollution and slum clearance. The Committee adopted the framework of the CPHA and worked through a system of subcommittees. James Rouse, who went on to design and develop vast inner city so-called 'festival marketplaces', was appointed chairperson of the Urban Renewal Subcommittee (through which the GBC's support of the Charles Center and Inner Harbor projects was orchestrated).

The Greater Baltimore Committee had an immediate impact on the development of a privately financed master plan for the downtown area. When the plan was adopted by the legislature, it realized that in order to demonstrate its effectiveness the Committee would have to focus on one or two smaller projects which would awaken the interest of the city population and gain the confidence of the City if successful. Charles Center, for which private capital was quickly raised, was an unqualified success in terms of commercial development and infrastructure improvement. More importantly, the

project gained massive media exposure with full credit for the development attributed to the GBC. The Committee went on to initiate and develop a number of small scale projects, as well as the impressive Inner Harbor scheme, throughout the late 1970s.

As an example of well-coordinated private sector involvement in city planning and development, Baltimore presents a long history of continuity in the sharing of responsibilities between power brokers, be they private or public. Clearly, the GBC was intended to be a non-profit private enterprise. The beneficiaries of its actions, however, have been the city's businesses rather than its citizens. The people of Baltimore probably feel that Charles Center is more desirable than the decaying wasteland it replaced. But within the context of a privately-sponsored, privately-executed, downtown plan, the goals for development were to render stagnating land uses profitable once more. The citizens of Baltimore now have festival marketplaces, harborfront vistas, landscaped walkways and numerous specialty stores. The changes have been physical and economic. Clearly, the GBC has fulfilled the goals it set for itself. Almost entirely with private money, the city of Baltimore has been given a centerpiece; a worthy demonstration of capitalism organizing to preserve the status quo, but in a fashion acceptable to those with an eye for aesthetics rather than equitable function.

9.5 Renaissance in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

During the nineteenth century, the city of Pittsburgh evolved from a military post to being one of the nation's most important industrial centers. As early as 1850, a larger share of Pittsburgh's population was involved in manufacturing than in any other U.S. city (Stewman and Tarr, 1982). In contrast, throughout the twentieth century, manufacturing growth in the city and the region has declined as the region's advantages - cheap mineral fuels and access to growth markets - weakened. Since the end of World War II, the city's overall manufacturing employment has decreased markedly from approximately 50 percent of the total workforce in 1940 to 25 percent in 1980 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940, 1980). In the same period, the total population declined from over 700,000 to less than 400,000.

Public-private partnerships are not unique to the twentieth century in Pittsburgh. In the nineteenth century, the city aided private firms in constructing railroads and began helping housing developers by providing sewers, streets and water in new subdivisions. But the most vigorous period of partnerships (before the institutionalized program known as 'Renaissance I') came earlier this century. Three citywide voluntary organizations - the Civic Club of Allegheny County, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Civic Commission - became involved with urban improvement projects. Their aim was to improve the inferior social, environmental and political conditions that were direct by-products of the

city's industrial development.

Pittsburgh's philanthropic industrial classes set a pattern for social intervention policy which acknowledged that social, as well as economic, needs had to be addressed in order to promote a stable urban community. The voluntary associations cooperated with successive city administrations in generating a centralized educational administration and in revising the electoral system. Institutional changes seemed realistic goals. In the more substantive areas of transportation, city planning, flood control and housing improvements, little substantive change was implemented: the forces of localism, vested economic and political interests, weak enforcement capabilities, and inertia prevented change in spite of corporate and financial leaders' support for it.

It was, once again, the private sector which drove the movement for coordinated urban revitalization in the 1940s and 1950s. A number of independent private organizations were established to reverse the entrenched pattern of decline - The Citizens' Committee on the City Plan (the CCCP later evolved into the Municipal Planning Association), the Golden Triangle Commission (a branch of the Chamber of Commerce geared to halting decline in city real estate values), and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) were the three key private catalysts in this period. The years that followed the establishment of these organizations in the mid-1940s witnessed the development of diverse revitalization projects which together are known as 'Renaissance I'.

Redevelopment projects could not begin without the state passing enabling legislation. Without consulting the Allegheny Conference or the other Pittsburgh private organizations, the Pennsylvania State Legislature passed a Housing and Redevelopment Act and supporting legislation in 1945 and 1946 which became known as 'The Pittsburgh Package'. Because of problems with initiating the intent of the enactments, the ACCD lobbied strongly for further legislation which would serve its social purposes. As a result, nine out of ten proposed bills were passed. They involved county smoke-control legislation, county refuse disposal, expansion of county control over subdivisions, creation of a parking authority, establishment of a county traffic and transit study commission, founding of the Parks and Recreation Department, and broadening the Pittsburgh tax base to include sources other than real estate.

At last, the legislative infrastructure for implementing meaningful social and economic programs was in place. An example of how social and environmental forces cooperated with one another came with the founding of the United Smoke Council of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, a sub-branch of the ACCD. The Conference helped the City try to moderate its impact on low income domestic fuel users by keeping an inventory of low-volatile coal and arranging for release of metallurgical low-volatile fuel by the steel companies if supplies ran low. On its part, the City's Bureau of Smoke Prevention followed a policy of education and

cooperation in enforcing the law against domestic and industrial fuel users rather than insisting on rigid adherence. The result was a much cleaner city (Stewman and Tarr, 1982).

In the arena of economic projects, public-private partnership was equally impressive. Point Park and Gateway Center are examples of cooperation between diverse interest groups in the areas of legislation, funding and implementation. Point Park, a recreational open space, and Gateway Center, a commercial redevelopment project, were conceived as complementary components of one plan. In recognition of the contributions being made by the ACCD in revitalizing downtown, the secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Forest and Waters requested that the Conference accept responsibility for implementing the park plan. The 36 acre open space was brought into being by two integrated actions. First, the design and layout conducted by the Steering Committee of ACCD. Second, the passing of resolutions permitting clearance of existing uses under the Redevelopment Act by the City Council. Together the public and private sectors brought into being a green space in the middle of a dense commercial zone. The blighted area abutting the park then emerged as the successful Gateway Center which saw massive re-construction in the 1950s. The Bell Telephone Building, a parking garage, a Hilton Hotel, a 22 story office building, the IBM Building, and the 27 story Gateway Towers Apartments now stand where once there was

rubble.

The environmental, high-rise and park projects of 'Renaissance I' are the physical manifestations of this period. But Renaissance involved a much broader range of projects - from sewage treatment plants and garbage collection improvements to housing and industrial park development. Each included a varying mixture of public-private partnership involvement in goal setting and planning. In most programs, the public sector role was primarily a facilitating one, but still of immeasurable importance. The private sector came to acknowledge the force with which the city administration supported its controversial and sweeping changes. The chairman of the ACCD noted, "The Conference did not have to be elected to anything. The public officials who were supporting the Conference's program did have to come up for re-election". There was, then, a moderating influence on both sides. Renaissance I appears to have been a most successful story in the public sector's ability to leverage private capital and expertise in promoting central city growth. As in the case of all the sample cities, whether or not the track record of each partnership meets the needs and milieu of the City of Providence in 1986 will be addressed by Chapter 10 of this thesis.

9.6 Progress in Central Atlanta, Georgia

Partnership in Atlanta has been a fairly recent phenomenon. Its selection for this study was based upon the

similar regional and national economic climates which today face downtown Providence. On October 27, 1981, the citizens of Atlanta elected a national figure to be Mayor - Andrew Young, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. While his radicalism did not at first appeal to the business community, there is increasingly a sense that partnerships between commerce and City Hall are taking off.

The current Atlanta economy was forged by two decades of transformation. During the relatively short period since 1965, an agrarian Southeastern economy has been replaced by a new industrial-technological society. This fast paced change is forcing Atlanta to come to terms with developing a public management apparatus attuned to changing needs.

During Atlanta's new growth phase - the 1960s and 1970s - the city made a quantum jump in economic development, advancing from its traditional role as a regional distribution, transportation, financial and professional services center to that of a large metropolitan area with a broad array of national economic responsibilities. Although the proportion of manufacturing jobs is relatively low, the economy is well diversified and has spawned entirely new local industries such as the convention business (at which Atlanta excels nationally). This is precisely the diversification recommended for Providence by the consulting firms of Carr, Lynch Associates and Melvin Levine and Associates in their Development Strategy (1986), with convention business identified as a key element.

'Central Atlanta Progress' (CAP) was formed in 1967 by the merger of the Central Atlanta Improvement Association and the Uptown Association. CAIA was founded in 1941 to represent the interests of the business community. Uptown was founded in 1962 by the directorship of the First National Bank and Sears-Roebuck to put private sector pressure on the City to execute public improvements. Neither had been particularly successful prior to their merger into the CAP.

During the 1960s, Atlanta began its greatest building boom, and the famous 'Forward Atlanta' national promotion program was launched under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce. Henson and King (1983) describe how Business Week labelled Atlanta as "the Cinderella city of the 1960s". The CBD was far outgrowing its traditional boundaries and it was clear that the core demanded a special plan to address its problems. CAP immediately initiated the Central Atlanta Study, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation and matching funds contributed by the City and Central Atlanta Progress. The City and CAP cooperated throughout the planning process and set the tenet for integrated public-private partnership for the next two decades. Balance was maintained because, while CAP was representing Atlanta's most powerful businessmen, it concentrated on strictly professional and technical input: its executive director was a professional planner.

The CAP took an even stronger professional role in the planning of downtown when a conscious decision was made in

1973 to hire Dan Sweat, Jr. to the top staff post. Very active politically, Sweat's personal motto was "get things done". He brought to CAP a vigor and impatience that remains characteristic of the agency to this day (Fosler and Berger, 1982). Sweat dealt directly with the Mayor and City Council members. He was seen as the mouthpiece of the business community. Quietly, but with self confidence, Sweat's CAP usurped the traditional power base of the Chamber of Commerce. The transition was so smooth that no controversy arose. Indeed, during the mid-1970s, the working relationship between the public and private sectors had never been better.

To summarize, Atlanta represents a case study in how to succeed, without creating a new agency, through improvement of existing institutional interaction. By improving relations between key players in City government and key players in a professional business organization, CAP ensured balance and continuity in the development of a dynamic downtown environment. Personalities emerge as being as important as (if not, more important than) the projects and plans themselves.

9.7 Collaboration of diverse groups in Portland, Oregon

Ben Chieh Lin (1970) characterized Portland as "America's Most Livable City". The area's scenic grandeur and some of the nation's strictest environmental protection laws have earned Portland the description: "One of the

largest small towns left" (Barbour, 1982). Barbour describes the generosity of public spirit among Portlanders. In a survey he conducted, the question was asked, "Do you feel that public-private cooperation is necessary for economic development to succeed?" To which one respondent answered, "Is there any other way to do it?" Most of the public-private debate has focused on the organizational dimension, because the need for cooperation is taken by most people as given.

Public policy in Portland might best be summarized as 'the politics of participation'. The diversity of the city is represented by 68 neighborhoods and some 54 separate neighborhood associations. Most of these participate in the process of urban planning, either directly or indirectly. For example, it is common practice for the City to consult with the associations on all matters relating to recreation, transportation, and housing. The Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA), established in 1974, shares responsibilities with the City Bureau of Planning and the Portland Development Commission for intervention and change. The three bodies combine to form an efficient vehicle for implementing development projects, both public and commercial. Consensus-building is the key.

Even the City's policy documents are grounded in recognition of the importance of public-private partnerships. The 1980 Portland Downtown Plan (which, incidentally, was drawn up by the City and independent associations themselves,

and not by outside consultants) views partnership as an essential ingredient in expediting goals. Not only the public sector, but the private sector realizes the need for by-partisan cooperation. In its 'Report on a Vision of Portland's Future', the business agency known as 'The City Club', stated: "Government and business relationships will improve with creative and flexible approaches to problem solving... Business and government will work together to set goals to meet environmental and social needs... Business owners will recognize that a healthy economy includes high-quality social, cultural, educational, and recreational institutions."

One example of public-private cooperation highlights the well-orchestrated integration of traditionally diverse groups. The 'Saint Johns Business District Improvement Program' set down clear goals at its inception. The development company, Lord and Leblanc Inc., the City, and the Office of Neighborhood Associations agreed that certain key ingredients must be recognized to ensure successful outcomes:

1. The importance of cohesive and identifiable neighborhood leadership
2. The value of a comprehensive approach
3. The need for a sense of place and identity
4. The importance of capacity building and the availability of expert staff.

These four statements of structure underpinned the economic rationale of conducting the Saint Johns revitalization

project. Saint Johns was seen, first and foremost, as a unique inner city neighborhood, not as a 'project area'.

From the outset, the business community and the planners believed that it was important to combine commercial improvement with residential area conservation so that homeowners would not be in competition with merchants for City dollars. An economic analysis showed that the central problem facing the business district was its inability to capitalize on growth in the area's market demand. With expansion and change, local business could capture a greater percentage of the growing neighborhood market. The final product of the planning process was a comprehensive program that set the basis for public expenditures in Saint Johns over a five year period.

In respect to implementation, the planners detailed the potential for public-private partnership in every element of the plan, thus maximizing capital resources and minimizing wasteful duplication of roles. Overcoming this stumbling block has been a major set-back in development projects in downtown Providence for years. In Portland, cooperative, mutually beneficial management underwrites the key component of the plan to this day: physical improvements alone will not solve the problems facing a central business district. The lesson of this booming Oregon city is that in order to create a strong commercial central place, it is equally important to improve management of business operations and to actively promote and provide new opportunities for private investment.

As Portland has proved, there is absolutely no reason why this goal should not be commensurate with preserving neighborhoods and community life, as long as those communities are represented in the planning and development processes.

9.8 Organizational frameworks for successful partnerships

Defining success is something of a normative exercise. Yet decisions will be made by politicians whether or not the planner has had time to establish recommendations. The four case studies illustrate how city administrations can facilitate wise long-range planning by involving business and, preferably, neighborhood groups in every stage of the decision-making process - from goal setting to implementation and management.

Because each city has achieved positive outcomes in its quest for balanced cooperation between the public and private sectors, components of the four approaches will serve as a prototypical model for Providence. Figures 9.1 through 9.4 are summary system diagrams, developed by this student, which serve to describe the institutional arrangements of the four case study agencies within their political environments. For the reader's convenience, they are appended to the end of this chapter as they serve to illuminate some of the discussions in Chapter 10.

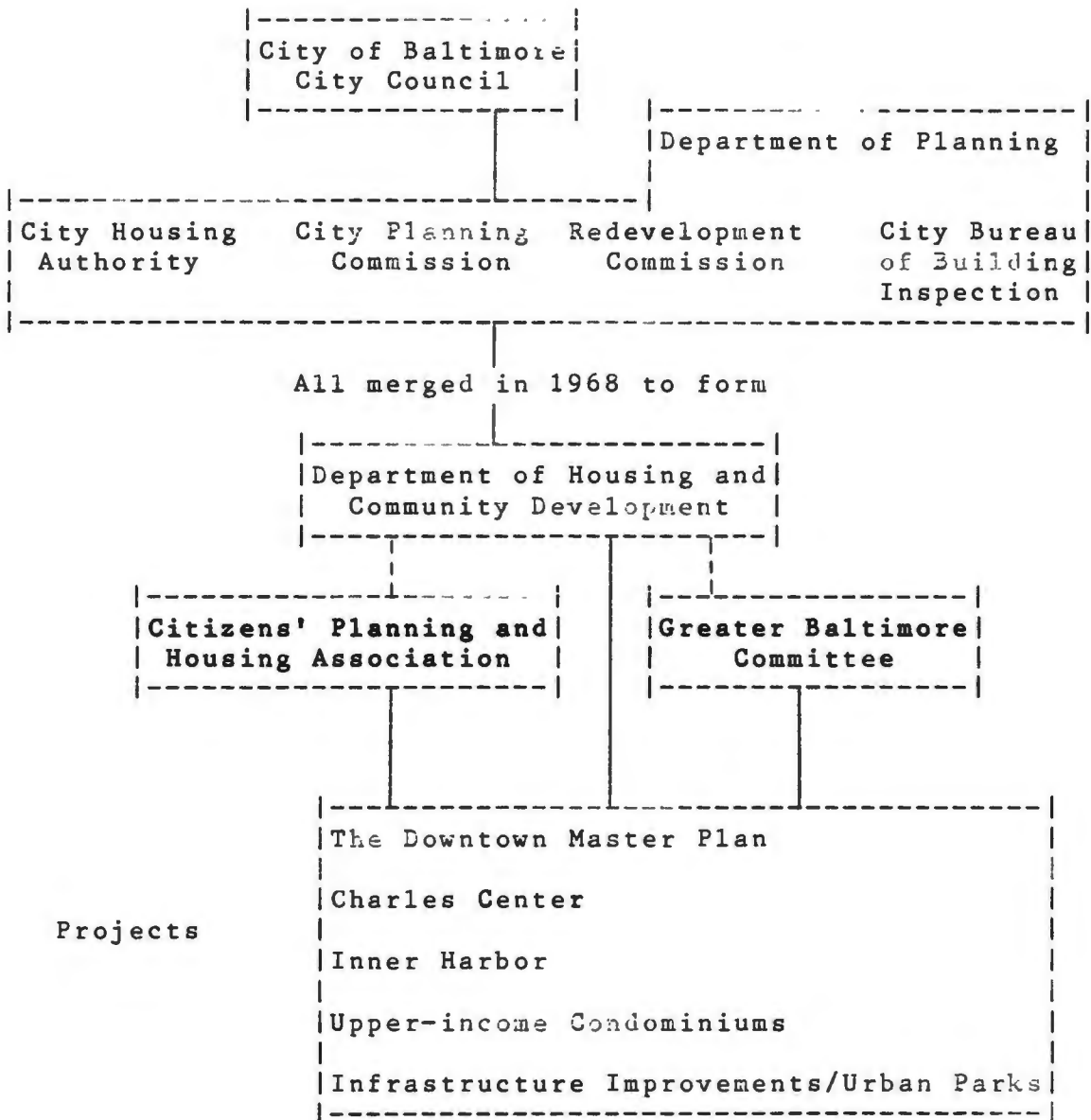
Several key lessons are learned from this analysis of other cities' experiences. Clearly, the milieu in which

planning is conducted is central to the chances of sustained success. An atmosphere of cooperation, such as that identified in Pittsburgh and Portland, is a reliable indicator of probable success. In cities like Atlanta, where businesses are aware of the benefits to healthy trade when social and environmental issues are dealt with, partnership is a natural extension of existing, non-institutionalized relationships.

Civic spiritedness on the part of City agencies and Chambers of Commerce, such as those in Baltimore, provide a firm basis for public-private partnership. When cities are able to tap the financial resources of the private sector, by involving them in mutually beneficial projects, a broader definition of 'public interest' is coined. If state and federal policies will no longer pursue interventionist urban policies, cities which ignore the possibilities of partnerships among existing resource bases within their own boundaries, are those which will continue to see decline.

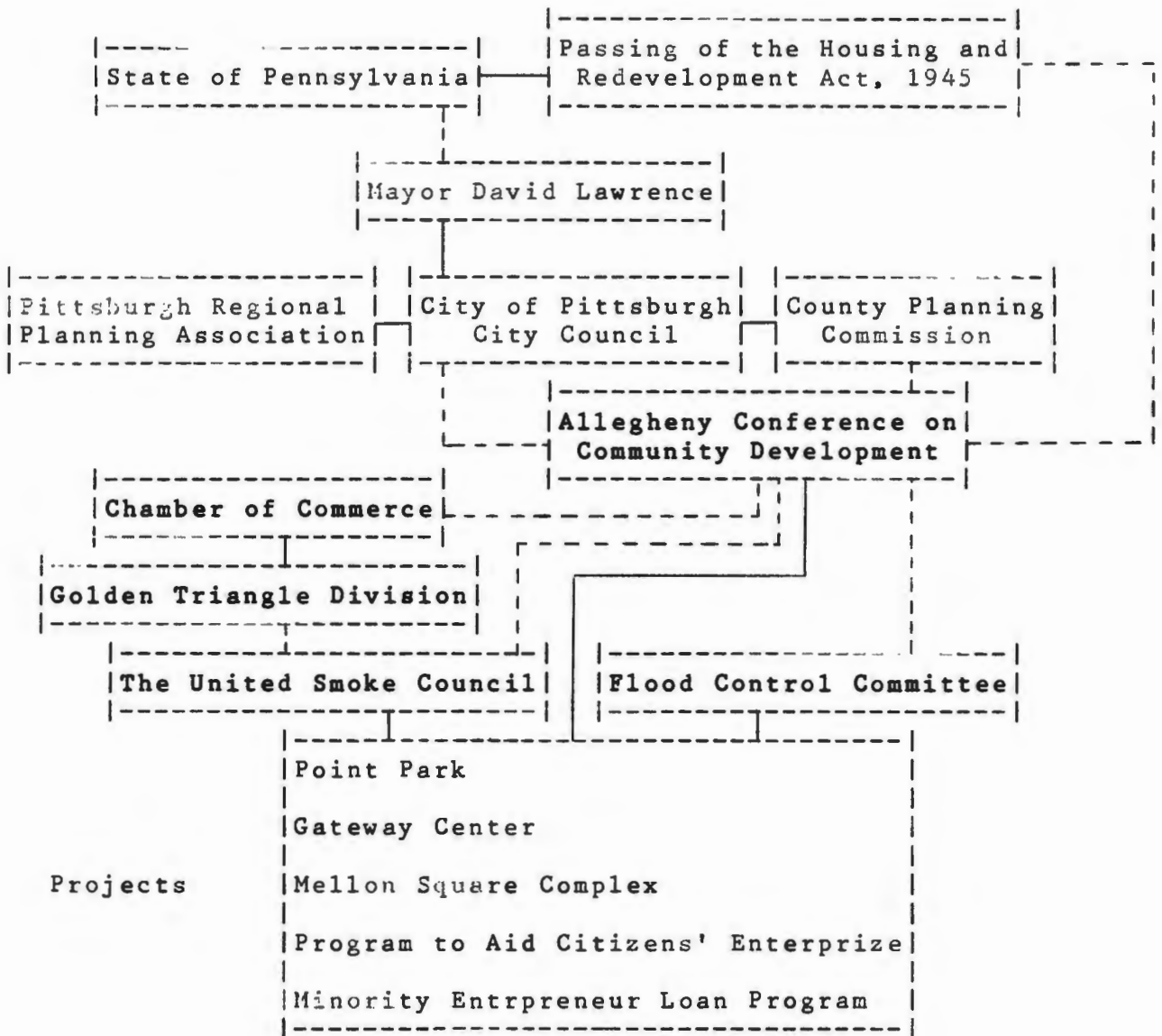
The task of the final chapter of this thesis is to identify the strong and weak points of the different public-private partnership mechanisms discussed above. In so doing, criteria are set for a new cooperative relationship in downtown Providence. It would be the intention of this new vehicle to identify and implement the desirable elements of the consultants' plan and would provide an answer to the question, 'After the Carr-Lynch-Levine Development Strategy, what next for downtown Providence?'

FIGURE 9.1
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN BALTIMORE



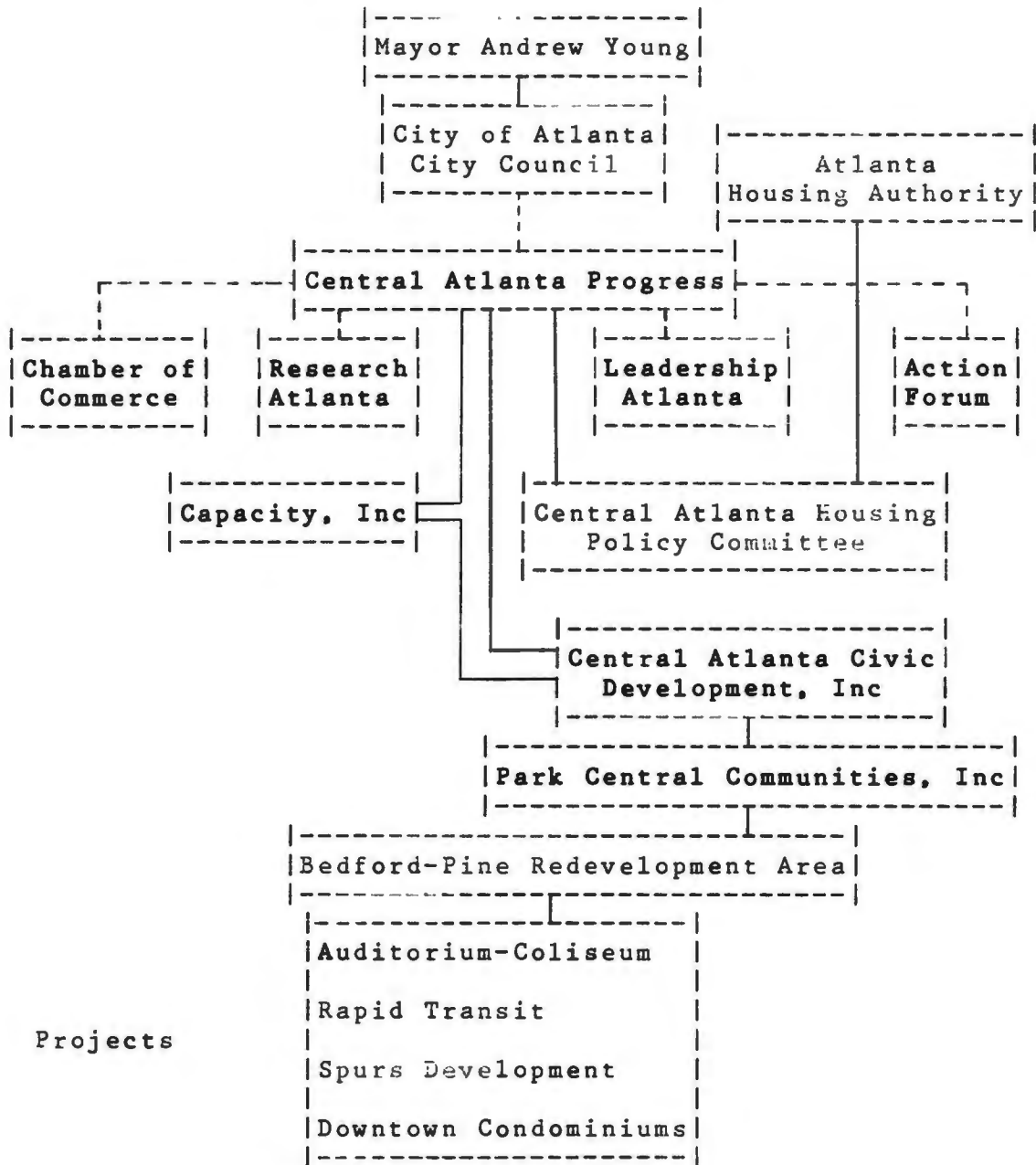
Key: Normal Text = Public Agencies
 Highlighted = Non-public agencies
 = Institutional relationship
 - - - - - = Cooperative/partnership relationship

FIGURE 9.2
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN PITTSBURGH



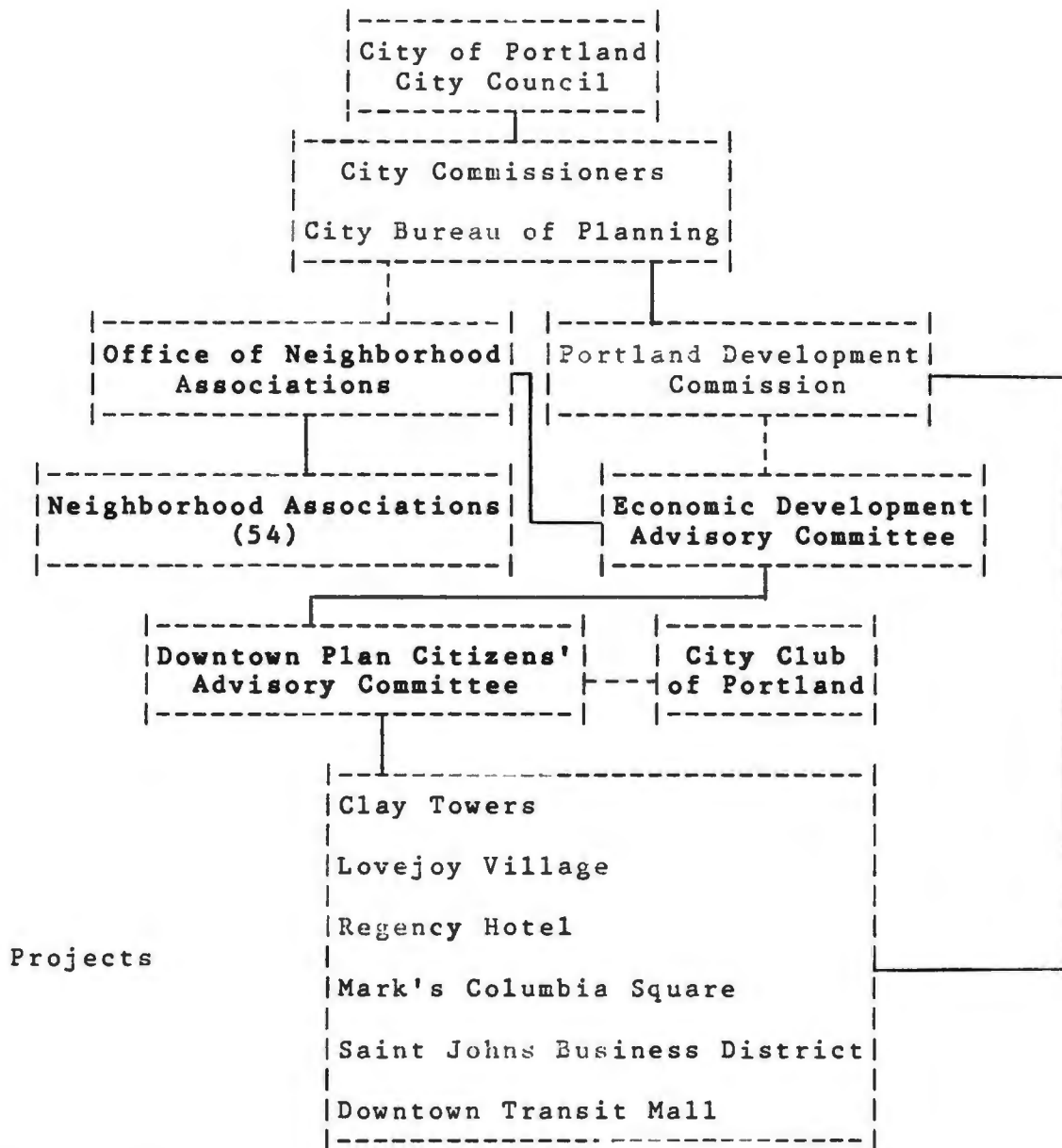
Key: Normal Text = Public Agencies
 Highlighted = Non-public agencies
 = Institutional relationship
 - - - - - = Cooperative/partnership relationship

FIGURE 9.3
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN ATLANTA



Key: Normal Text = Public Agencies
 Highlighted = Non-public agencies
 = Institutional relationship
 - - - - - = Cooperative/partnership relationship

FIGURE 9.4
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN PORTLAND



Key: Normal Text = Public Agencies
 Highlighted = Non-public agencies
 _____ = Institutional relationship
 - - - - - = Cooperative/partnership relationship

CHAPTER 10
A NEW APPROACH TO PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT
IN DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

"A downtown management authority is no guarantee of success. It will require considerable work and constant promotion... but to do nothing is a sure sign of decline. The city is moving forward with much of its work in progress or on paper, but now the ball is in the hands of the private sector to work concurrently with the city..."

Chester Smolski, 1986

10.1 The time is ripe

It is apparent from the preceding case studies that a major rethinking process is under way in the United States concerning the appropriate roles of government and private institutions in responding to human needs. Fueled in part by the reinvigorated conservative movement and public concern over the cost and effectiveness of government programs in the past, efforts are being made to fashion alternative ways to address the problems of downtown communities.

Chapter 6 identifies a list of some eighteen agencies already in existence in downtown Providence, Rhode Island. Yet, disappointingly, there is little evidence to be found of inter-agency cooperation even at the most rudimentary level of information-sharing. The fragmentation of roles in the planning and management of the city core might well have been politically beneficial to incumbent mayors (no one agency ever gaining sufficient jurisdiction or power to challenge Administration initiatives or, indeed, the actions of other agencies), but the legacy constitutes inefficient chaos. Indeed, one of the major goals behind the establishment of the Providence Local Development Corporation (PLDC) and the Providence Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) in the early 1980s, was to guide potential investors through the morass of regulatory, advisory and financing bodies then in existence. Since that time, neither of these agencies has fulfilled the promise of coordinated commercial and industrial development in the city.

With the arrival of the Carr-Lynch-Levine Development Strategy earlier this year, the City at last has a starting point; a focus for integrated downtown management. While the financing outline and the accountability of the proposed Providence Company have run into the expected political wrangles over power brokerage, the Department of Planning and Development now has an opportunity to institutionalize efficient downtown planning. Setting aside the reservations expressed throughout this thesis as to the capability of the key actors to settle the issue in the prevailing political climate, this final chapter assesses the experiences of the cities described in the preceding case studies and, finally, attempts to propose a prototypical management entity and public-private relationship for Providence's core.

10.2 Identifying strengths in downtown management

While Baltimore is often held up as the most successful example of downtown revitalization partnership, its prestigious Charles Center and Inner Harbor Projects were not without problems in respect to their implementation.

The City contracted with Charles Center/Inner Harbor Management Corporation to manage the mechanics of the development process, the CCIHMC having been created by the City as a quasi-public organization to manage land acquisition, site preparation, construction and package-development deals. It will be noted by readers from Providence that the problems catalogued below relate to

implementation difficulties rather than to the inter-relationships among agencies. They seem, therefore, less acute and more 'downstream' than the problems which might be anticipated when institutionalizing partnership in the capital of Rhode Island.

Three broad categories of negative impacts on plan implementation in downtown Baltimore are identified: opposition to a new network of urban expressways in and around the CBD; resistance of smaller businesses to displacement from the renewal area; and citizen opposition to the siting of Harborplace on one of the last open spaces on the waterfront. In each case confrontation brought about either defeat or victory for the City. But, again in each case, the overall plan and partnership arrangements survived. As an example of how the City and the CCIHMC resolved conflict, the case of the Harborplace location is described.

By the time the Harborplace markethouse project was announced, the city's residents had become accustomed to the 'gap' in urban development at this location on the waterfront. Because urban infill had been so thorough elsewhere, Baltimoreans had developed the habit of frequenting the remaining open spaces on the north and west sides of harbor developments. The most notable of local events staged there was the Baltimore City Fair that brought millions of people downtown each year.

When it was announced that part of the new project would be located on one of the waterfront's last undeveloped tracts

of land, objections were rampant throughout the residential community, as well as the small nearby business community of Little Italy. The debate was finally settled when the City agreed to hold a referendum. The arguments on both sides were put forward in the local media and in open meetings. Before the ballot, the City agreed to set aside Rash Field and three urban park areas as recreational open spaces in perpetuity.

Because of the frankness of all parties, a free flow of discussion, and the popularity of the waterfront plans once they were widely publicized, the result of the vote was overwhelmingly in support of Harborplace. This case study is one which demonstrates the benefits of a free-flow of information and opinion, from diverse quarters, in building a consensus of public and private viewpoints behind a downtown plan. It should be noted, once more, that the means of implementation were rarely even questioned. Baltimore had a fine history of cooperation among its citizens and businesses; Harborplace bears witness to the progressive nature of the relationship between the two.

The need for partnership arrangements to be flexible, even highly dynamic, is demonstrated by the example of Pittsburgh. The previous chapter noted several achievements of the so-called Renaissance movement in the city. But between the distinct phases of the public-private partnership (known as Renaissance I and Renaissance II) there was a period of five years now known as 'The Interlude'.

The crescendo of the Civil Rights Movement into what amounted to a national emergency was felt strongly among the ethnic communities of Pittsburgh. The difficult fiscal conditions of northeastern and mid-Atlantic cities hit hard in this western Pennsylvania metropolitan area at the same time. Large scale 'physical fabric' developments, heavily subsidized by the federal government, began to wind down. Perhaps as a result of these factors, an independent mayor, whose motto was "I'm nobody's boy", was elected. All this marked the beginning of the unsettling period known as The Interlude.

No-one has ever suggested that development came to a halt, nor that public-private partnerships came abruptly to an end. Rather, although Renaissance I partnerships were gradually dissolving, a major new type of partnership - appropriate for its time - was being shaped: social and organizational cooperatives between the public and private sectors. Three specific areas of change emerged: new links with the previously ignored black community; the reformulation of urban renewal policies into positive housing programs; and the improvement of efficiency within the city's government.

Perhaps the axiom that applies to Pittsburgh (and should now be applied in Providence) is that winning the battles is not half as important as winning the war. In-fighting among competing groups never achieves the results of striving for long-term, apparently unattainable, goals. The leaders of

governments, agencies, and companies come and go. City partnerships must therefore be willing to overcome the stigmas of traditional inter-group relationships and take account of new personalities, work habits, technologies and changing patterns of policy among groups.

It is a tribute to Pittsburgh that, despite the flux of national turmoil which gave rise to the local Interlude period, three major public-private brick-and-mortar developments were successfully executed during this time: a rapid transit system, new bridges, and a large convention center were all realized during this era of profound social and economic change. In attempting to formulate a new agency and a new set of inter-agency relationships in downtown Providence, this thesis subscribes to the models of both Baltimore and Pittsburgh in that each demonstrates the preparedness to accept changing circumstances and the ability to adapt to changing demands. Planning, after all, is primarily about change.

In Atlanta, the most recent example of partnership is to be found. It too indicates that an ability to interpret the political milieu and respond to changing community needs are fundamental to achieving successful public-private partnership. In 1973 two quite separate trends gave rise to a power shift in the central city: a black mayor with a largely black administration came to office; and the neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations were emerging as a new powerbase, consolidated after successful opposition to

highway construction during the preceding three years. It is difficult to determine whether a conscious decision was made by Central Atlanta Progress to strengthen its capability to meet these and other problems, but the beginning of an enlarged, broader based CAP was under way.

The transition of power away from the traditional Chamber of Commerce to Central Atlanta Progress was never seen by local businessmen as a threat to the status quo. Few could argue with the credibility of CAP's sole criteria for membership: a willingness to work for the collective interests of downtown. CAP began to pride itself on being a reservoir of power and action. Besides, it carried out much the same program as had the Chamber of Commerce, but with greater efficiency and greater popularity. The key lesson for Providence policy-makers is that operations in Atlanta are carried out by experts in the problem area at hand, regardless of the titles or job descriptions of individuals. If downtown Providence agencies could acquire, and later, cede power where necessary - according to the needs of identified problems - surely the progress would be sufficient to justify the emergence of new forces. If an agency like the Providence Company were given time to prove its worth (in social as well as dollar terms), the benefits of partnership would be undeniable and unanimously accepted by doubting individuals from both public and private sectors. How can officials expect real change if they will not set up a mechanism to facilitate it?

The final case study, that of Portland, presents a very positive view of neighborhood participation in social and economic development projects. Few cities can have witnessed the flourishing of common interests between so many different power bases. As is found in each of the case studies (and as is patently not the case in Providence), the political milieu of Portland has a long history of cooperation and consensus-seeking. Each party clearly recognizes the benefits of compromise - on all sides - in mediating development disputes and achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.

George Barbour, Jr. (1982), writing on Portland, notes, "Most of the public-private debate has focused on the organizational dimension, but such cooperation has an important human dimension... When the institutional framework... is stripped away, what is left, basically, is people cooperating with people." The lesson learned from Portland is that ceding power is equally as important as acquiring it. Only through moderation can downtown development, sensitive to all groups to be impacted by policy, be achieved. To this end, certain 'equity safeguards' are built into the prototypical model for Providence ventured by this chapter.

10.3 The Downtown Development Task Force redefined

Sub-section 10.4 presents the key recommendations of this document: the Providence Company and a new set of inter-agency relationships among existing downtown

organizations. But the means by which this new entity will come into being are probably as important as the entity itself. Unless there is a solid coalition among vested interests from the outset, any attempt by the City to institute a fresh approach will last no longer than the initial outrage it will engender. Quite simply, it will be ignored and, through isolation, be rendered useless.

The purpose of re-stating this fact before outlining the form and structure of the proposed Providence Company is to admonish local officials and captains of industry for their fragmentary, self-serving actions in recent decades. Because of its long history of fractious politics and the exclusivity of its agencies, Providence shares none of the benefits which enabled Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Atlanta and Portland to make their partnerships a reality (see Chapter 9). The timidity and over-sensitivity of the Department of Planning and Development must cease. This large agency must seize the current opportunity, in the wake of the Carr-Lynch-Levine Development Strategy, to catalyze a new partnership between the public and private sector. One way to commence this process would be to arm its Task Force with a more equitable representation of downtown interest groups and utilize it as a tool to set up the new downtown entity.

Some damage to the credibility of the Task Force has already been done. As noted in Chapter 8, one member feels she was brought into the fold to "rubber stamp" a fait accomplis. The Chamber of Commerce was far from pleased that

the consultants were appointed and the Development Strategy executed before they were involved. It is hardly surprising that the reception of the consultants' proposals for a new management organization was luke warm throughout the private sector; the businesses to be relied upon to both finance and initiate projects were never directly consulted by the City. This was a grave error, but not insurmountable if future steps are taken with due courtesy to all parties.

The selection of new members for the Task Force should take account of a wider range of both public and private interest groups. The Providence Foundation and Chamber of Commerce must have a more significant voice, particularly if the consultants' proposals for funding the new agency are to be refined into an acceptable package. Because office space is instrumental in the phasing of the Development Strategy (a form of which would constitute the Providence Company's new Downtown Plan), property owners and property management companies should be better represented. Officials of all the major banks, of at least vice-president standing, should be invited to take part, especially as funding for individual development projects, as recommended in the Strategy, rely heavily on private financing.

Also integral to coalition-building will be the presence of non-profit organizations concerned with housing and social issues, as well as the continued presence of a senior representative of the Capital Center Commission. The Department of Planning and Development ignored the tenants'

associations and socially-oriented agencies in its selection of Task Force members in June, 1986. If future downtown development is, as the consultants' suggest, dependent on the emergence of a "downtown neighborhood", the rights of current downtown dwellers must be fairly balanced against the anticipated influx of young, urban professionals and condominiumization. Representation of the academic community is well served by the expertise of current members, Glenn Kumekawa of The University of Rhode Island and Melvin Feldman of Brown University. Arthur Markos, Thomas Moses and Kathleen Field, the senior professional team within the Department of Planning and Development, should continue to hold seats.

The re-aligned Task Force would consist of thirty members with two sub-committees, one addressing the elements of the Development Strategy which should be prioritized for implementation by the Providence Company, the other addressing the selection of members for the Providence Company Board. The nomination of members, three from the public sector and three from the private sector, would then be voted on by the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce, respectively. As described below, the professional staff of the Providence Company would be appointed by the Board and most definitely not by outside parties. By keeping the political debate and power-play in the arena of initial goal-setting and agency formulation, once the Providence Company was established, it would be free to execute its Downtown

Plan independently of external forces. Only the constitutional checks of the Board's accountability to the City and the Chamber would be required.

10.4 The Providence Company

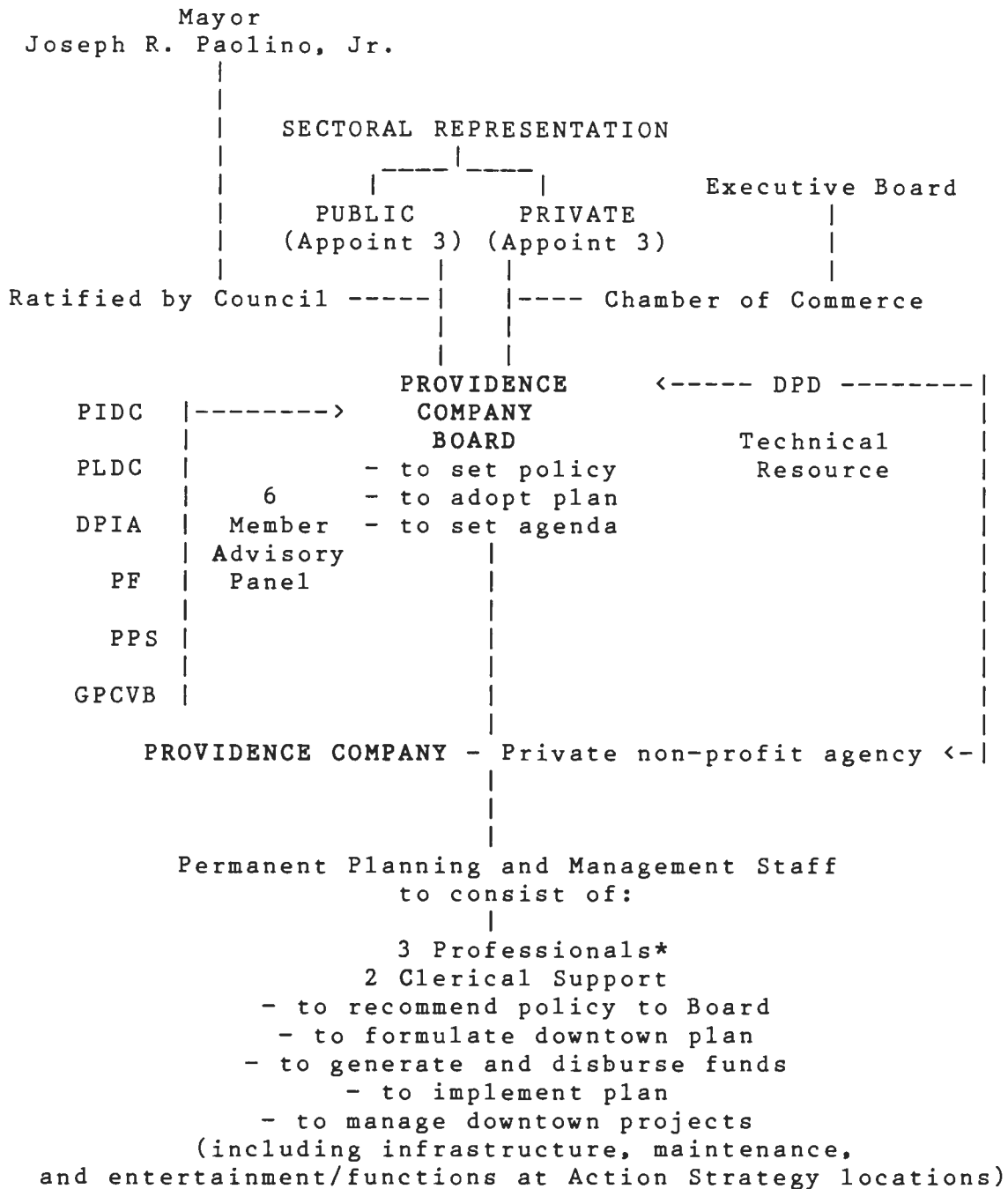
The need for a separate planning and management agency to deal solely with the interests of downtown Providence has never been greater. The model proposed by this section attempts to take account of a number of key factors in formulating a relevant, timely organization:

1. Eighteen agencies and organizations dealing with downtown issues already exist.
2. None of these agencies has a particularly good working arrangement with any other.
3. There is much duplication of effort in some areas, while others are ignored entirely.
4. The public and private power bases are interminably fragmented, with no partnership entity dealing with downtown currently in existence.
5. The professional staff of the Department of Planning and Development are few in number and greatly overburdened with mandated day-to-day planning procedures.
6. There has been no spontaneous 'internal' effort to institutionalize partnership in Providence.
7. Other American cities have reaped enormous benefits by promoting sustained public-private partnership.

The model is presented, in summary form, in Figure 10.1.

FIGURE 10.1

THE PROVIDENCE COMPANY -- A MODEL



* One member of DPD to be permanently assigned to PC
 * Two members to be recruited from outside the City
 of whom one should be a fiscal/management specialist

A detailed description is provided below.

- Representation

There are two essential ingredients in the workability of the model:

1. The Providence Company would have two branches: a Board to set policy and receive input from other lobbyists/organizations, and a line agency in the form of a non-profit designed to be free from direct external forces.
2. The Board would have three representatives each from the public and private sectors, thus institutionalizing the concept of partnership. The appointment of a chairperson would be by vote of the City Council and Chamber Executive Committee.

The public appointees to the Board would be ratified by the City Council (and would therefore not technically be mayoral appointees), while the private members would be ratified by the Executive Board of the Chamber of Commerce (and therefore not be puppets of key downtown commercial interests).

The non-profit agency would have three full-time professional staff, one drawn from the Department of Planning and Development (to ensure compatibility, complementarity and continuity in planning), the others to be selected from a nationally advertised search for planning and management experts. One of the two individuals hired from outside the City would have extensive fiscal and management experience. The professional staff would be appointed by the six Board members, free from the influences of both the Administration

and the private sector. This check is designed to protect the entity from abuses from its very beginnings. Two clerical staff members would be hired independently of the public employee unions to allow for flexibility in promotions, firings and pay scales. The City would be required to provide secretarial and material support as necessary.

While the Department of Planning and Development would serve as a permanent technical resource (its plans and data sources freely available to the Providence Company professional staff), an external Downtown Policy Advisory Panel (DPAP) would be established to transfer input from existing agencies into the overall goals of the new entity. The six member Panel would consist of the executive directors or senior administrators of the six agencies which have played the most significant role in the development, planning, management and preservation of downtown Providence. The Providence Company Board would be required to meet with the Panel on a quarterly basis, but would not be bound by its recommendations. The Board alone would decide what policy best served the interests of downtown partnership. Board members would serve for four years and then be required to stand for re-election. The planning/management professionals would have permanent positions, but could be dismissed by a majority vote of the Board. The Advisory Panel would change only if members were dismissed from the executive/administrative directorships of their own agencies.

- Planning, management and funding

The purpose of the Providence Company would be to implement those elements of the Carr-Lynch-Levine Development Strategy selected and refined by the Task Force and, later, by the Board, to formulate the Downtown Plan. The Downtown Plan would be adopted by the Board and, within the confines of a designated 'Downtown Development District', would be the substance of downtown planning for the next twenty years. The Providence Company Board would be encouraged to adopt the Downtown Plan within three months of its appointment, a period during which the line agency professionals would be interviewed and hired in preparation for plan execution.

The content of the Downtown Plan would be assembled in a similar manner to the current Development Strategy, but would exclude generalizations and concentrate on designated development projects and infrastructure improvements. The Plan would be phased in three distinct sections, as proposed by Carr-Lynch-Levine.

This vehicle, serving as the formal, institutionalized expression of partnership, would be free to enter into development agreements with both City agencies and private companies. Its funding and means of loaning monies would follow the Tax Incremental Financing proposals of the consultants. Whereas at present there is considerable opposition to T.I.F., there is no superior means of generating capital for improvements. In terms of ceding power, this would be the private sector's major contribution

to the concept of partnership and the validity of broad based intervention in the free market.

In the long-term, the benefits to be derived by commerce from increased activity in the city core would far outweigh the sacrifices of incremental tax levies.

10.5 Summary

It is hoped that this thesis has made a sound case for a new management entity in downtown Providence. Section I outlined the economic necessity for greater attention by policy makers - both public and private - on the core area of Rhode Island's capital city. The initial chapters also analyzed the work of the consultants and identified severe shortcomings in their Development Strategy.

In attempting to overcome the inertia generated by the mayoral elections and the poor handling of the Strategy (from its inception through the post-presentation review phase), a rational attempt was made in Section II to present a detailed outline of what the City might try next. If Mayor Paolino's Department of Planning and Development can use its Task Force as a non-partisan tool to build a coalition around the Providence Company and bring a lasting focus to bear upon downtown, it will achieve what no Administration has ever achieved in Providence: a meaningful and effective partnership between the public and private sectors.

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