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Comprehensive City Plan Fort Walton Beach, Florida 1960

George W. Simons Jr.

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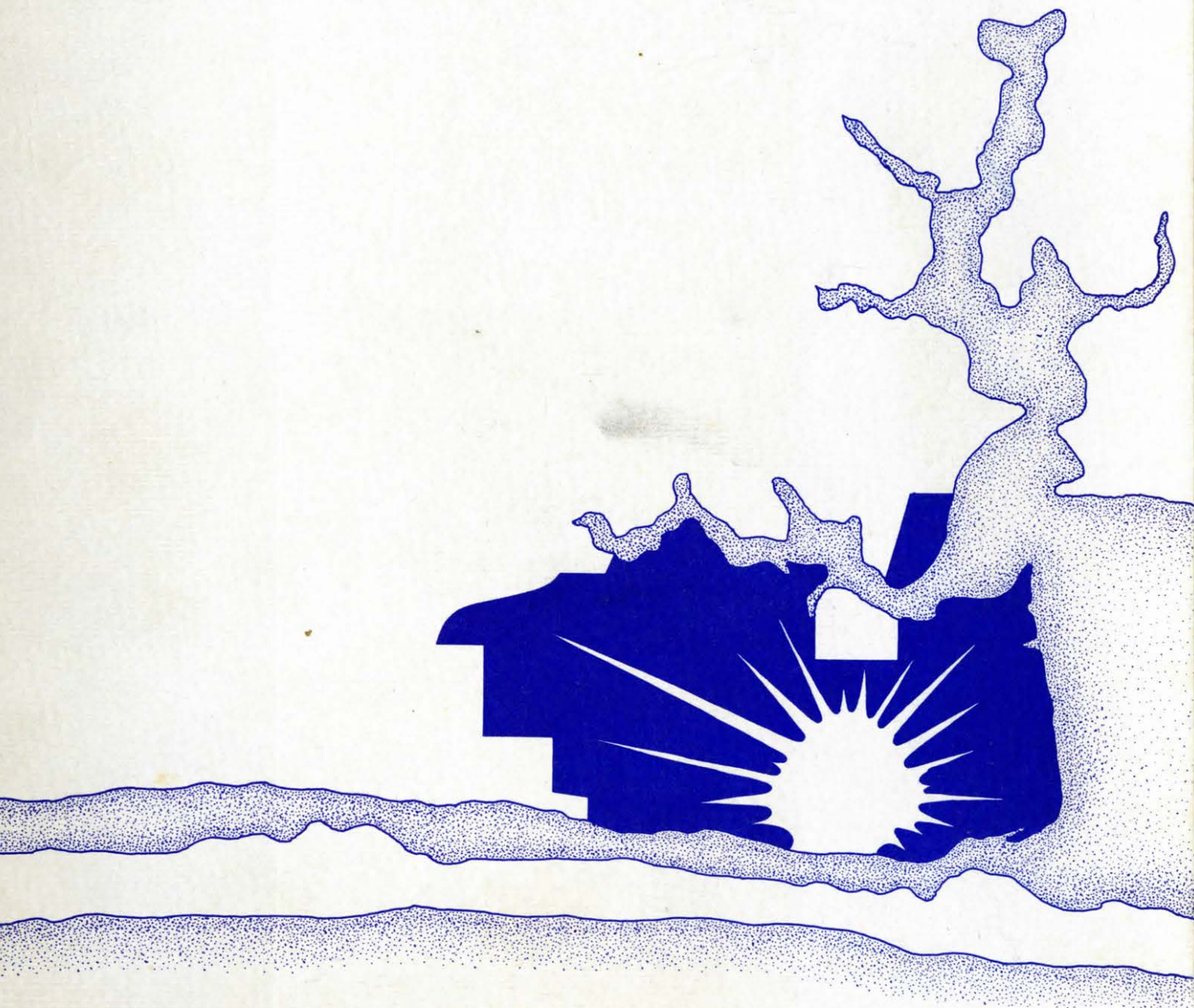
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**COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLAN
FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA**

1960



F O R T W A L T O N B E A C H
F L O R I D A

C O M P R E H E N S I V E C I T Y P L A N
March, 1960

Mayor

Hilary T. Stewart

City Councilmen:

Theodore Bass, Mayor Pro Tem

William J. Roberts, Jr.	James M. Ready
Clifford H. Long	H. H. Carnathan
Leah W. Miller	French Brown, Jr.

Municipal Advisory Board

Edward W. Clarno, Chairman

Winston G. Walker	Roy L. Ricks
Vivion R. Pelham	John T. Smith

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Jacksonville, Florida

For and under General Direction of the Florida
Development Commission and in collaboration with
the Municipal Advisory Board of Fort Walton Beach,
Florida.

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through an Urban Planning Grant from the Housing and
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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL

Fort Walton Beach had its beginning in the period following the War Between the States. In 1867 John Brooks, a war veteran from Alabama, selected a site of 111 acres on which he built a three room cabin. Other settlers soon followed.

A subsistence economy, based upon hunting and fishing with a little farming, supported the settlement called Brooks' Landing, later Brooksville. Other settlements in the area included Mary Esther, Boggy (later Niceville) and Destin which was founded earlier (1845). In 1884 the population of the area required the establishment of a small schoolhouse in nearby Mary Esther. There was a general store, grist mill and saw mill in Boggy and in 1902, the first hotel called the Brooks House was built in Brooksville to be followed by the first post office in 1906. At this time the name was changed to Camp Walton after Captain Walton of the Walton Guards who encamped in the area during the War Between the States.

Lumbering and turpentine were important sources of cash income to the early economy; nearby Pensacola was the most important pitch-pine port in the world during the last part of the 19th century. In the 1920's new horizons, capitalizing on the area's water, beaches and climate, hinted at new frontiers for settlement and resort activity.

The Florida land boom of the 1920's left its imprint on the area, altho rather faintly compared to the success in the peninsular portion of the State. Fringed with beaches and inland waterways, the Gulf coast from Pensacola to Panama City attracted its share of promoters and a few developers who visualized here another Riviera of America. To accommodate visitors to the bay country, hotels were erected in Mary Esther, Valparaiso and Fort Walton. From this start, the region has grown to a significant status as a resort area known as the "Playground" based mainly on southern patronage.

The natural advantages of Choctawhatchee Bay inspired exaggerated plans for a great commercial port in the vicinity of Valparaiso. Great cities were planned around the port activity and two railroads were proposed to connect the port with a hinterland that was devoid of the people and the economic base required to make the dream a reality.

Not all the dreams of this period terminated in the paper stage however. James E. Plew, a developer from Chicago, invested in the area and built an inn and golf course, among other projects, in the Valparaiso area. As an aviation enthusiast, Plew provided facilities for and interested officers from nearby Maxwell Field at Montgomery, Alabama, in the area's recreational advantages. As early as 1931 the need for a gunnery and bombing range for Maxwell Field became apparent and because of the acquaintance of aviation men with the Choctawhatchee country, attention was finally focused here for land and water ranges.

Plew saw the advantages of army payrolls for the area and contributed time, money and land to insure the development of the area for military aviation. In 1933 the Valparaiso airport was developed on 137 acres for use of Maxwell Field. Plew then offered 1,460 acres of land for the development of a permanent military reservation, which was not accepted until 1937 when the range was designated Eglin Field. As permanent facilities were developed here in ensuing years and the area's strategic potential was realized, defense officials began to negotiate the transfer of the Choctawhatchee National Forest which was established by Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. Local interests were strongly in favor of the transfer and in 1940, by Act of Congress, the vast preserve was added to Eglin Air Force Base to make it the nation's largest military installation. From that time, the build up at Eglin Field was intensified to assume its important role in the war effort and in today's defense program.

CHAPTER II

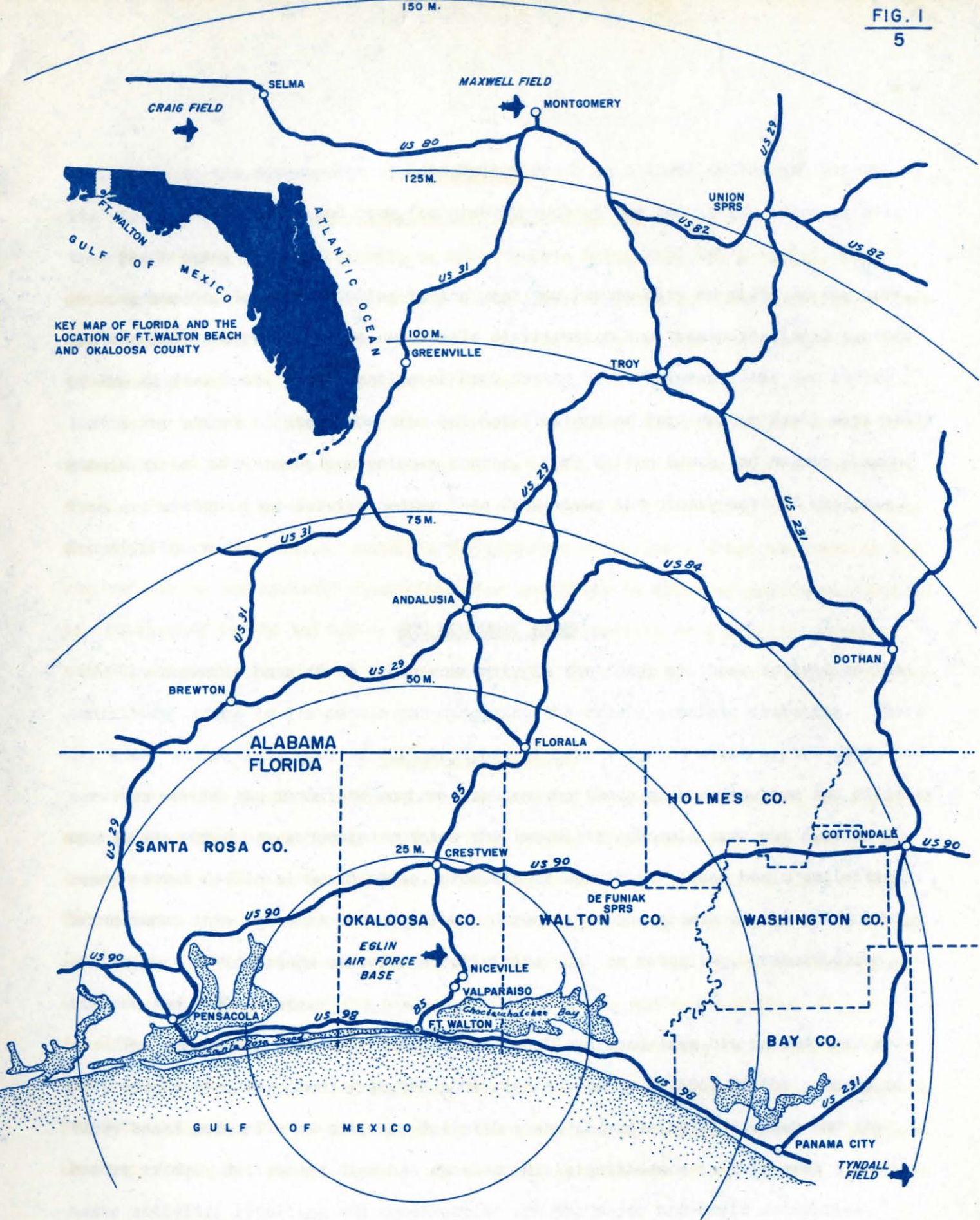
LOCATION, ECONOMY AND POPULATION

The factors most influencing an urban area's future are its location, its economy and its population. Planning of Fort Walton Beach's future physical pattern and community facilities must begin with an examination of the various factors influencing growth and future characteristics.

There are many reasons for the existence of cities but most cities result from a combination of factors deeply rooted in economic, political or military determinants. In a world of changing technology those factors influencing initial success may cease to be operative; meanwhile the momentum of an early start may provide the basis of people and economic diversification essential to eventual greatness. Not to be overlooked is the influence of competing urban centers of a similar economic nature, which may strongly limit the realization of a dormant advantage of location.

FACTORS OF LOCATION

Fort Walton Beach is situated at the west end of Choctawhatchee Bay on a peninsula between Santa Rosa Sound and Five Mile Bayou. Choctawhatchee Bay, one of the largest natural deep water harbors on the Gulf Coast, is a connecting link of the intracoastal waterway. The Gulf Beaches of this area are as attractive as any found in Florida and many visitors annually find them so. Situated at the confluence of U. S. Highway 98, an important east-west tourist route and State Highway 85, an important connecting link with Eglin Air Force Base, Crestview, U. S. Highway 90 and points north, Fort Walton Beach is the hub of the "Playground" area. Because of its accessibility, Fort Walton Beach is the principal convenience center of southern Okaloosa County for retail trade. Any economic enhancement of the general area will



KEY MAP OF FLORIDA AND THE LOCATION OF FT. WALTON BEACH AND OKALOOSA COUNTY

REGIONAL LOCATION OF FORT WALTON BEACH

contribute to the development of Fort Walton Beach as a trade center and because of its superior facilities and room for growth, much of the population increase will take place here.

Pensacola, located 40 miles to the west and Panama City 64 miles to the east, are the dominant retail trade, wholesale distribution and transportational centers of the coastal area. The location of Fort Walton Beach between these two cities limits the extent of its trade area but notwithstanding Fort Walton Beach will still remain as an outstanding convenience center. Fort Walton Beach and nearby communities are without rail service nearer than Crestview, the county seat of Okaloosa County (Figure 1).

THE ECONOMIC BASE

The economic base of an urban community is the total of those activities that contribute income to its people and determine the area's economic character. There are basic activities, such as certain types of manufacturing which export goods and services beyond the immediate economic sphere, and those such as tourism and military operations which are supported outside the immediate economic area but provide a ready market for local merchandise, products or services. These basic activities bring money into the area and contribute directly to the growth of the community and support a wide range of service activities such as retailing, construction, finance and real estate.

The economy of Fort Walton Beach and the Playground Area has passed thru several stages of development from the subsistence economy of 1867 to the economy of today based primarily on military operations and secondarily on tourism and the resort trade. Retirement also has considerable significance in this area as a basic activity; retailing and construction are the major non-basic activities.

In 1940, when the build up at Eglin Air Force Base was accelerated, the entire population of Okaloosa County was only 12,900 persons, which reflected an increase of only 30% over the 1930 population of 9,897 persons. However by 1950 the increased military construction and operations were responsible largely for an increase in county population to 27,533, an increase of over 113% since 1940. An official U. S. Census taken in 1956, however, revealed an additional increase of 92% over 1950 to a total of 53,014 persons in Okaloosa County. The present estimate is 57,000 persons.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Economic developments are reflected in employment data. Because the most intensive development has taken place in the southern part of Okaloosa County, employment trends for the County as a whole are very significant in the picture of development of the Fort Walton Beach area.

TABLE 1

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY FOR ESTABLISHMENTS COVERED BY
THE FLORIDA STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENDATION ACT
OKALOOSA COUNTY

<u>INDUSTRY</u>	<u>TOTAL COVERED IN 1956</u> <u>(ESTABLISHMENTS OF</u> <u>FOUR OR MORE)</u>		<u>1950-1956 COMPARED*</u> <u>(ESTABLISHMENTS OF</u> <u>EIGHT OR MORE)</u>		
	<u>PAYROLL</u>	<u>EMPLOYEES</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u>
TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES	\$11,737,697	3,905	1,210	3,073	150
CONTRACT CONSTRUCTION	\$2,356,138	732	292	644	120
Building construction, general contracting	1,335,256	423			
Other contract construction	1,020,882	309			
MANUFACTURING	1,091,133	493	183	436	138
Lumber & wood products, except furniture	394,076	183			
Other manufacturing	697,057	310			
TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC UTILITIES	809,427	207	108	210	86
RETAIL TRADE	3,200,745	1,252	358	809	126
General Merchandise	105,293	76			
Food and liquor	482,859	197			
Automotive	1,030,151	260			
Retail trade, n. e. c.	645,985	212			
Eating and drinking places	664,877	376			
Other retail trade	271,580	131			
FINANCE, INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE	672,189	195			
SERVICE INDUSTRIES	2,938,499	803	169	651	285
Hotels, etc.	231,554	124			
Personal services	416,640	176			
Other service industries	2,290,305	503			
OTHER NON MANUFACTURING	667,566	223	27	186	

*For purposes of comparison the figures for establishments of 8 or more employees must be used to show trends from 1950 to 1956. In 1956, however, coverage of reporting firms was extended to include those with four or more employees.

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, A BASIC INDUSTRY

The development of Eglin Air Force Base resulted from several strategic factors of location; proximity to Maxwell Field, availability of vast open spaces of pine barrens and ocean for gunnery and bombing ranges and sparseness of population.

Most of the population growth of the southern part of Okaloosa County has resulted from military activity, either directly or indirectly. At the close of World War II there were over 11,000 officers and men and 4,000 civilians employed at Eglin Air Force Base. Since 1950 the combined strength of military and civil service personnel has ranged from 7,910 in June, 1950, to 15,581 in December, 1956. The combined strength reported in January, 1959, stood at 10,842, with 7,860 military and 2,982 civil service personnel. In addition, there are some 1,500 personnel employed by some 45 contracting companies located at Eglin Air Force Base.

If we assume that normal strength for Eglin Air Force Base is about 9,000 military, 3,000 civil service and 1,500 contractor personnel, it appears that out of an estimated 17,500 persons employed in southern Okaloosa County over 77% of the area's employment is based directly on military operations. In as much as a large proportion of the military personnel are housed on the base, some with their families, the military contribution to the economy is not in direct proportion to the number of military personnel. By conservatively weighing the figures for military personnel in accordance to the proportion living off base and more dependent upon the economy, which is about one-third, it appears that the area's economy is at a very minimum 65% dependent directly upon military payrolls. However, when the indirect effect upon retailing, construction and other service activities is considered, it is estimated that the economy of the southern half of Okaloosa County is based 80% or more on military activities.

The annual payroll in 1958-1959 at Eglin Air Force Base was approximately \$17,300,000 for civil service employees and was about \$15,000,000 for military personnel. This does not include salaries of contractor personnel. In addition, approximately \$16,000,000 in local purchases were made in 1957. Facilities at Eglin Air Force Base are being expanded to include a Strategic Air Command and a guided missile base. The anticipated increase of 900 military personnel and 400 contractor personnel during 1959 will make even more pronounced the dependence of the area economy upon defense operations.

OTHER BASIC ACTIVITIES

Other basic industries important to the economy of southern Okaloosa County are tourism and resort activities, retirement service and commercial fishing. Agriculture and forestry contribute to the economy of the county as a whole but are of less importance in the southern than in the northern part of Okaloosa County.

Fort Walton Beach is located on U. S. 98, which is the east-west route serving thru traffic desiring to use the more scenic Gulf Coast route. In addition to intercepting much of the tourist traffic, Fort Walton Beach enjoys a waterfront location with ready access to the nearby beaches. Superior recreational advantages in swimming, boating, hunting and fishing serve to attract thousands of tourists to the Playground Area annually. Fishing is a major attraction.

As a medium priced summer resort area, the Playground attracts people from the southern states during the summer months. There are currently more than 1,000 motel, hotel, cottage and apartment units in the area to accommodate tourists and seasonal residents. In February, 1959, a survey numbered approximately 440 units in Fort Walton Beach and the surrounding area; 555 units in Destin and 85 units on Santa Rosa Island. Assuming two persons per unit, over 2,160 persons can be accom-

modated but because of the large number of apartment and cottage units available upwards to 3,000 persons can be accommodated at one time. Many more units are under construction and in the planning stages, all of which indicate a considerable growth in the tourist contribution to the economy.

Fort Walton Beach is attractive to people for retirement for the same reasons that tourists come to the area. As the general urban area grows and can support more recreational and cultural facilities, its advantages for retirement should add even more to the economy. A recent estimate by the Commandant of Eglin Air Force Base indicates there are now about 1,100 retired military personnel living within a twenty-five mile radius of Fort Walton Beach. This alone shows that military activity of the area contributes substantially to the retirement industry. Many military families, having been stationed in Fort Walton Beach during their tour of duty, find the area to their liking and remain here or, return on retirement from the service. In addition the area will become increasingly appealing to military retirees seeking a location near a large military installation where they can continue to enjoy the available recreational, medical and post exchange facilities. Because many military retirees are comparatively young upon retirement, they also add to the labor supply available in skilled workers and technical personnel.

Commercial fishing contributes to the economy of the general area and over 80 persons are employed. At Niceville is located the fourth largest seafood packer in Florida, with an annual catch of over 2,000,000 pounds. The combined catch at Destin is estimated at 1,650,000 pounds annually.

There are approximately 863 farms in Okaloosa County occupying about 104,000 acres representing about 17% of the total land area of the County, from which about \$1,300,000 cash income is derived annually from agriculture and forest products. In 1954 this income, exclusive of forest products, was distributed as follows: all

field crops, \$460,000; livestock and livestock products, \$331,000; dairy products, \$107,000; poultry and poultry products, \$99,000; a total of \$1,047,000. Since 1950 there has been a decline in agriculture in terms of people supported and number of farms, altho the area in farm land has remained about the same. In 1950 there were 998 farms run by 960 operators; in 1954 there were only 863 farms run by 812 operators.

NON-BASIC ACTIVITIES

Any increase in basic activities will create a corresponding increase in trade, construction, professional and other services. This relationship, studied by the United States Chamber of Commerce, generally means that 100 new jobs in factories or other basic activity will result in an additional 74 jobs in servicing activities and in the establishment of 4 more retail enterprises. The majority of these servicing requirements will be in retail and wholesale trade.

Because of its strategic location as the hub of the Playground area and because of its accessibility by radial highways, Fort Walton Beach has developed rapidly as the retail center of the immediate trade area however, the extent of this area is limited in effectiveness by the proximity of Panama City and Pensacola. Nevertheless, Fort Walton Beach is still the principal convenience goods center of an area extending 15-20 road miles westerly and 25-30 miles to the east and north-east. Within this trade area centered around Eglin Air Force Base is a population approximating 40,000 persons. In 1950 there were only 456 retail establishments in Fort Walton Beach but now there are more than 1,000.

According to the most recent information supplied by "Sales Management", the total retail sales for 1958 in Okaloosa County were \$48,307,000, the Effective Buying Income was \$82,823,000 or a per capita of \$1,392.00. According to the

same source, 53% of the families of Okaloosa County were in the \$4,000 and over income bracket and 13% were in the bracket of over \$7,000 in 1957.

Table 2 reflects the percentage distribution of Personal Income by Major Industrial Sources as of 1957 for the State of Florida and Okaloosa County.

TABLE 2

PER CENT DISTRIBUTION - MAJOR INDUSTRIAL SOURCES -
PERSONAL INCOME - FROM "ECONOMIC LEAFLETS" - 1958
(In Thousands of Dollars)

	<u>FLORIDA</u>	<u>OKALOOSA COUNTY</u>	<u>ESCAMBIA COUNTY</u>
Total (dollars)	\$7,647,000	\$96,341	\$301,302
Extractive, Processing, Fabrication	22.2%	6.1%	26.6%
Agriculture	4.9%	1.6%	0.7%
Mining, Fishing	0.7%	0.1%	0.2%
Manufacturing	8.1%	1.4%	17.0%
Construction	8.5%	3.0%	8.7%
Trades, Services & Related Ind.	40.6%	16.4%	27.2%
Transportation, Communications,			
Utilities	5.9%	1.7%	4.8%
Finance, Real Estate, Insurance	4.9%	1.2%	2.9%
Retail & Wholesale Trades	17.6%	6.5%	12.6%
Services, Trades, Professions	12.2%	7.0%	6.9%
Government	20.8%	71.6%	36.7%
Unclassified	16.4%	5.9%	9.5%

From Table 2 it will be noted that Government is the principal contributor to the economy of Okaloosa County, its contribution for Okaloosa County being more than three times what it is for the State at large and nearly twice what it is in neighboring Escambia County.

TRANSPORTATION - POWER - UTILITIES

Fort Walton Beach is removed some thirty miles from the nearest trunk line railroad, a branch line of which extends southward from Crestview to Eglin Field. Its service however is restricted to governmental operations incident to Eglin Air Force Base. Consequently, Fort Walton Beach must depend almost wholly on the common carrier operation of the M. R. & R. Trucking Company which has interchange services from Jacksonville; Dothan, Alabama, and Pensacola.

The Gulf Power Company supplies the electrical power for Okaloosa County and its various political subdivisions.

The Intracoastal Waterway operates a barge service into the area, handling principally rock, gravel, sand and petroleum products.

Air Service into the area is provided by Southern Airways from Atlanta to Eglin Field.

Passenger bus service is provided to Crestview on the north and to points in Alabama, also to Tallahassee and points east and to Pensacola and Mobile and points west.

Northern	114,224	1,223,400	84.2
Central	100,224	1,417,600	48.7
Southern	102,792	1,500,200	76.3
FLAD	1,771,000	4,238,200	88.0
Okaloosa County	27,283	33,014*	62.0

*Special Census, 1960

While the southern portion of Florida registered a substantial increase in population, 1950-1967, Okaloosa County exceeded that of the state in the same period.

POPULATION

In 1920 Okaloosa County had a population of 9,360 which was less than that of Fort Walton Beach in 1956. Since then the trend of population growth for the county as a whole, for its southern portion and for Fort Walton Beach is shown graphically in Figure 2.

The growth of Fort Walton Beach is studied as a part of the larger trend in order to determine those factors operative on state, regional and local levels. Florida is the fastest growing state east of the Mississippi River; between 1950 and 1957, Florida's population increased by 1,671,000. The distribution of these people about the state however is not uniform as shown by Table 3.

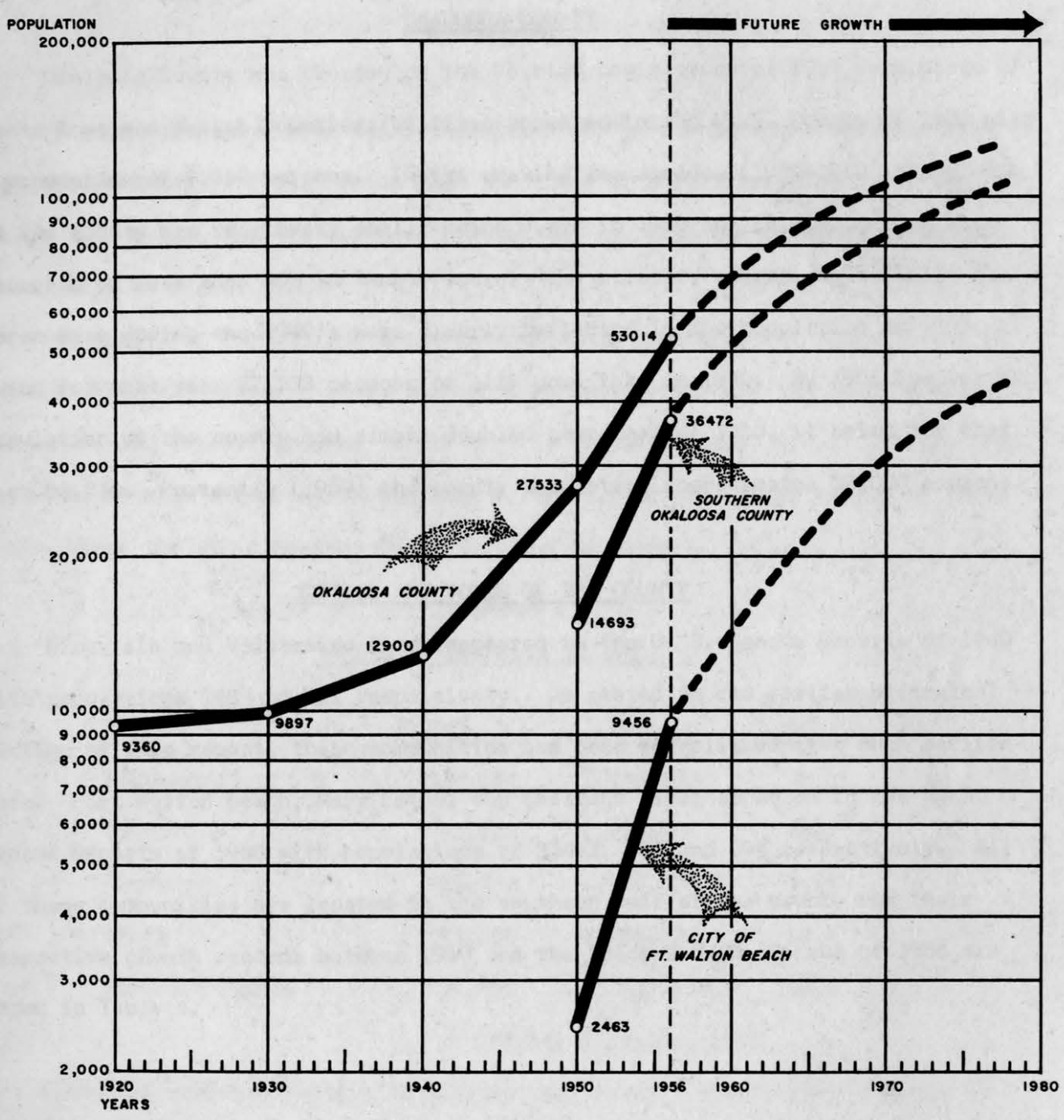
TABLE 3
REGIONAL GROWTH OF FLORIDA

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u> <u>1950-1957</u>
Northern	914,984	1,230,400	34.4
Central	953,224	1,417,600	48.7
Southern	902,792	1,590,200	76.3
STATE	2,771,000	4,238,200	53.0
Okaloosa County	27,533	53,014*	92.5

*Special Census, 1956

Altho the southern portion of Florida registered a substantial increase in population, 1950-1957, Okaloosa County exceeded that of the state in the same period.

FORT WALTON BEACH PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH CURVE



OKALOOSA COUNTY

Okaloosa County was created by the Florida Legislature of 1915 from parts of Santa Rosa and Walton Counties; it first appeared in the U. S. Census of 1920 with a population of 9,360 persons. In the ensuing two decades (1920-1940) the growth of the county was relatively small, being 9,897 in 1930 and 12,900 in 1940 - an increase of less than 40% in twenty years. The military operations at Eglin Air Force Base during the 1940's were clearly reflected in the population of 1950, it being for that year 27,533 persons or 113% more than in 1940. By 1956 however the population of the county had almost doubled over that of 1950, it being for that year 53,014. Currently (1959) the county population approximates 57,000 persons.

CITIES AND TOWNS OF THE COUNTY

Niceville and Valparaiso first appeared in the U. S. Census Reports of 1940 with populations 948 and 221 respectively. As stated in the earlier Historical section of this report, these communities had been established at a much earlier date. Fort Walton Beach, Mary Esther and Shalimar first appeared in the U. S. Census Reports of 1950 with populations of 2,463, 332 and 694 respectively. All of these communities are located in the southern half of the county and their respective growth records between 1950 and the Special U. S. Census of 1956 are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

1956 POPULATION DATA COLLECTED BY A SPECIAL
CENSUS OF OKALOOSA COUNTY AND INCORPORATED PLACES
U. S. CENSUS, SEPTEMBER 21, 1956, AND APRIL 1, 1950

<u>COUNTY AND INCORPORATED PLACES</u>	<u>1956 POPULATION BY COLOR</u>			<u>1950</u>	<u>% INCREASE</u>
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>WHITE</u>	<u>NON WHITE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>1956 OVER 1950</u>
Okaloosa County	53,014	49,453	3,561	27,533	92.5
Crestview	7,495	6,745	750	5,003	49.8
Laurel Hill	441	441	-	327	34.9
Southern Half Okaloosa County	36,472	-	-	14,693	148.0
Fort Walton Beach	9,456	8,184	1,272	2,463	283.9
Niceville	4,645	4,641	4	2,497	86.0
Valparaiso	6,960	6,569	391	1,047	564.8
Cinco Bayou	746	744	2	-	-
Mary Esther	509	503	6	332	53.3
Shalimar	794	792	2	694	14.4

The population growth since the special census of 1956 can be estimated from the increases in utility meters, telephone services and building permits. Using 1956 as a base, the increases in the aforesaid indices indicate a population of approximately 57,000 in Okaloosa County at the end of 1958, 41,000 (74%) of which are resident in the southern portion and 10,500 in Fort Walton Beach. In 1956, 6.7% of the population of Okaloosa County was non-white but in Fort Walton Beach, the non-white population was 13.5% of the whole.

Whereas in Florida in 1950, 64.1% of the population were ages 39 or less, 23.6% were in the age group 25-39 years and 8.6% were 65 years of age and older, in Okaloosa County for the same period, 80.6% were ages 39 or less, 27.8% were in the 25-39 age group and only 4.15% were 65 years of age and older. And in the special census of 1956, 82.8% of the population were ages 39 or less, 26.6% in the age group 25-39 years and 2.9% were 65 years of age and older (Table 4). These data reflect that the population of Okaloosa County - the southern half particu-

larly - is a relatively young population with a preponderance of residents falling within the most active and productive age groups.

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE POPULATION

<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>FLORIDA</u> <u>1950</u>	<u>OKALOOSA COUNTY</u> <u>1950</u>	<u>OKALOOSA COUNTY</u> <u>1956</u>
Less than 5-39, inclusive	64.1	80.6	82.8
25-39	23.6	27.8	26.6
65 and over	8.6	4.2	2.9

FUTURE PROJECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the data here presented it is possible to make some future projections however such projections are less reliable than from an area having a longer period of population growth and economic diversification. Even after experiencing large increases percentage-wise, the population of Okaloosa County and its various municipalities is still comparatively small. The population trends in the southern part of the county indicate that approximately 80% of the growth during the past twenty years has been derived directly or indirectly from military operations - a factor independent of local control. At the present moment there appears to be little doubt that military operations will continue for an indefinite period to contribute to the economic stability of the area.

Table 2 has shown that Agriculture is not much of a factor in the economic structure of Okaloosa County and Forestry maintains only a nominal position today. Factors influencing the general growth of the state as a whole will influence local expansion, at least at a rate equal to that of the northern part of the state.

Tourism and retirement plus the influx of many industries into the state will in all probability continue at present levels. The southern portion of Okaloosa

County is well situated to benefit from these trends which are responding to good climate and good living conditions.

For the immediate future, a population increase of about 3,500 persons can be expected as a result of 400 contractor personnel and 900 military personnel being added to military operations during 1959. Extending present trends to 1965 indicates approximately 82,000 population in Okaloosa County, 65,000 in southern Okaloosa County and possibly 21,000 in Fort Walton Beach. Beyond this period projections are considered highly speculative.

While it is true that the present economy is based mainly upon military operations, the population growth derived therefrom is rapidly providing the population base upon which greater economic diversification might develop. A larger labor pool and better urban facilities afforded by the general growth should stimulate additional development. Any development of the general area will be reflected in considerable growth of Fort Walton Beach. Fort Walton Beach has more room in which to grow than neighboring towns. There will be no difficulty in providing for the 1965 projected population within the existing corporate area. Opportunities are available for expansion into unincorporated contiguous areas, if desirable.

In their "Economic Study of Rural Areas of Florida" the Arthur D. Little firm suggested that efforts to encourage industries to locate in the Fort Walton Beach area be concentrated on: electronics, in connection with Eglin Field; furniture manufacturing; petro-chemicals; and sporting goods manufacture such as boat building. Industries attracted should be in harmony with the further development of the area as a tourist and resort center. Additional expansion of the retirement industry should be possible to take advantage of climate, attractive surroundings and superior recreational facilities.

CHAPTER III

LAND USES AND GENERAL LAND USE PLAN

"Land use planning is a part of (the) larger process of city planning. (It) is basically concerned with the location, intensity, and amount of land development required for the various space using functions of city life - industry, wholesaling, business, recreation, education, housing and the religious and cultural activities of the people".

"Urban Land Use Planning" - Chapin.

As a dynamic organism, a city is constantly growing and changing because of its economic importance and development. From the fishing camp with its few homes and shacks, the city of Fort Walton Beach has developed as an important economic and social entity with a potential favorable to still further growth.

As the village, town and city increased in population and expanded territorially, land was used for various purposes and activities - for the conduct of industry and business, for public and semi-public uses, for streets and for the housing of its people. In the growth process a land use pattern was formed. Commercial activities developed at first around a strategic focal point, around which homes, churches and schools and other functional structures, were erected. Along the waterway docks and industrial activities were established. How this pattern of land uses expanded and a knowledge of its composition are fundamental to rational planning. The amounts of land occupied and utilized by the various uses reflects the requirements of the community.

LAND USE COMPOSITION

As an initial step in the study of Fort Walton Beach, an existing land use map was prepared on the base map drawn to a scale of 1 inch = 400 feet. This provided a record in color showing how all parcels of land are currently used. It is the land use pattern that has developed thru the years. A generalized existing land use map is shown in Figure 3.

GENERALIZED EXISTING LAND USES

1959
COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLAN
FORT WALTON BEACH
FLORIDA



800' 0' 800' 1600'
SCALE IN FEET

1959
PREPARED BY
GEORGE W. SIMONS, JR.
PLANNING CONSULTANT
UNDER CONTRACT WITH
THE FLORIDA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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

LEGEND

- RESIDENTIAL
- PUBLIC-SEMI PUBLIC
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL

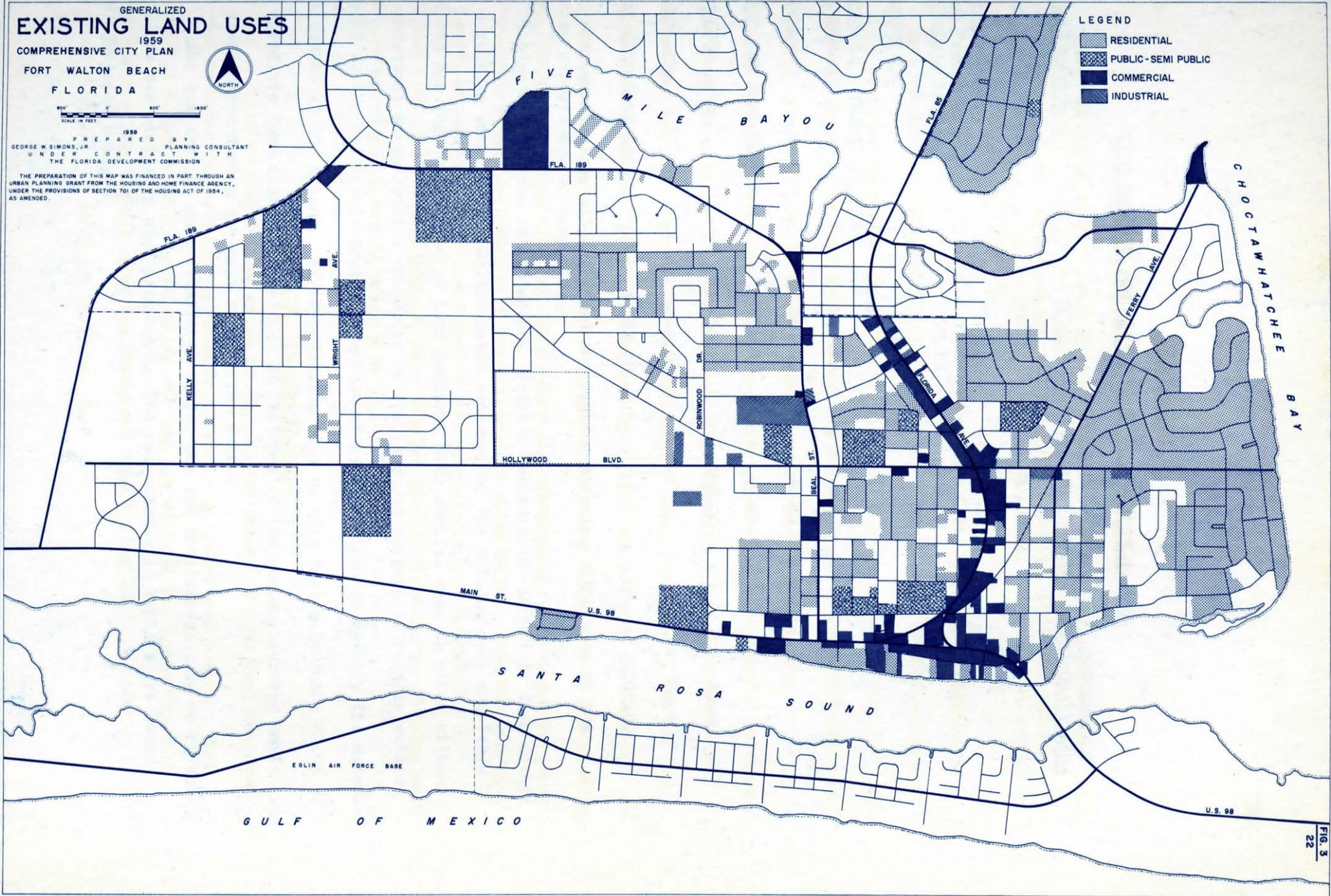


TABLE 6
LAND USES IN THE CITY OF FORT WALTON BEACH, 1959

<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>PER CENT OF DEVELOPED AREA</u>	<u>PER CENT OF CORPORATE AREA</u>
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	545.77	37.63	
Single Family	511.51	35.27	
Two Family	11.57	.79	
Multiple Family	22.69	1.56	
COMMERCIAL	100.39	6.91	
INDUSTRIAL, TRANSPORTATION, WAREHOUSING	23.66	1.63	
STREETS*	501.92	34.62	
PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC	278.50	19.21	
DEVELOPED AREA	1,450.24	100.00	43.40
VACANT AREA	1,892.04		56.60
TOTAL CORPORATE AREA	3,342.28		100.00

*Streets include all developed and platted streets, altho some of the platted streets are undeveloped.

Tables 6 and 7 are enlightening. Table 6 reflects the amount of land within the corporate area of Fort Walton Beach consumed by the various uses and Table 7 reflects how the consumption of land compares with similar uses in other cities. The outstanding residential character of the land use pattern is readily evident as well as the relatively small percentage of land required to satisfy the commercial demand at the moment. It is revealing also to note that only about 43.4% of the corporate land area was developed at the time of the survey, leaving ample area for development during the next five to ten years.

Altho comparative data from other cities are not conclusive, they do reveal how lands are similarly used elsewhere. The percentages in Table 6 are based upon developed area.

TABLE 7
LAND USES COMPARED
FORT WALTON BEACH AND OTHER CITIES
(PERCENTAGES OF DEVELOPED AREA)

<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>FORT WALTON BEACH, 1959</u>	<u>33 SATELLITE*</u>	<u>DELAND 1959</u>	<u>ORLANDO 1957</u>	<u>WEST PALM BEACH</u>
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	37.63	41.98	47.20	51.80	39.41
Single Family	35.27	36.18	42.50	45.90	28.44
Two Family	.79	3.31	2.50	2.50	6.21
Multiple Family	1.56	2.49	2.20	3.40	4.76
COMMERCIAL	6.91	2.54	5.24	7.50	6.49
TRANSPORTATION, INDUSTRY	1.63	12.51	1.26	3.40	9.50
STREETS	34.62	27.67	29.60	26.90	27.90
PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC	19.21	15.30	16.70	10.40	16.70
TOTAL DEVELOPED AREA	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

*33 satellite cities, from studies by Harland Bartholemew, are cities of comparable size in various parts of the United States. DeLand has a population of about 10,500, same as Fort Walton Beach. Orlando had a population of about 76,000.

Fort Walton Beach, as every other city, is predominantly a single family community; 35% of its developed lands are utilized by individual families. Significantly, there seems to have been little demand for duplex or multiple family uses. Fort Walton Beach is unique in the large percentage of land used for streets, about 34% as compared to an average of about 28% for 33 satellite cities. This probably reflects to some degree the youth of Fort Walton Beach - a city that grew up in the automobile age. Many of the streets however included in the calculations of Tables 6 and 7 are platted but not yet constructed. This street percentage will decrease when more vacant lands are developed.

Less than 7% of the city's developed area is used commercially as compared to 2.5% for the 33 satellite cities; however, when compared with other Florida cities,

the amount appears quite normal for cities the economy of which is identified largely with tourism and retail trade.

Fort Walton Beach has no railroad properties nor any large industrial properties, therefore the amount of land devoted to transportation and industry is relatively low. 19.2% of the developed land is used for public and semi-public uses which is higher than most cities which reflects an excellent public attitude toward adequate school sites, parks, playgrounds and public building sites.

The early development of Fort Walton Beach took place along the water front and Main Street. Prior to World War II most of the developed area was contained within the area bounded by Beal Street on the west, Washington Avenue on the east and Hollywood Boulevard on the north and the waterway on the south. It is within this older area that a preponderance of mixed land uses are now found. Within this older area also are found the city's few substandard dwellings and blighted areas. Despite the vacant lands still found in this section residential development moves slowly within it. Commercial expansion, breaking away from Main Street and Florida Avenue, is consuming lands contiguous to these thoroughfares, thereby broadening the central commercial base.

After World War II new subdivisions developed rapidly in the fringe areas. Lands east of Florida Avenue were among the first to be improved and today this area presents a fairly compact homogeneous residential section of many new homes. Development westerly of Beal Street is of more recent date and currently this area is most active. Only a small portion of this area is developed altho it is served by good roads and two elementary schools. This area has a high potential for good residential development but care must be exercised to separate the areas used for residential purposes from those intended for industrial expansion and heavy commercial activities. In the vicinity of Hollywood Boulevard, west of Beal Street

is an incipient industrial district, established when it was a fringe to the then developed area. West of this the city dump and sewage disposal plant are located, which are factors that may seriously blight adjacent residential properties and arrest development in the immediate surrounding area. Eventually tho the dump property should be developed into a useful park to form an excellent buffer between the residential and industrial uses.

THE GENERAL LAND USE PLAN

The General Land Use Plan is essentially a plan of objectives for the guidance of officials and the public in making decisions for the future development of the area. It is a general picturization of how the lands of the city and its immediate urban fringe should be utilized to promote their most orderly development.

In seeking to encourage the most wholesome, well balanced pattern of land uses, the Land Use Plan will provide adequately for the needs of residential, commercial, industrial and public uses. The land uses will be adjusted to the arterial highway plan in a manner to preserve the integrity and value of neighborhoods and provide adequately for recreation, parks, schools and other public facilities.

FUTURE LAND USE REQUIREMENTS

Existing land uses as presented earlier, the traffic circulation pattern, trends of population growth and physical improvements are basic to a determination of the probable needs of the future community. Such studies revealed errors that should be avoided but more important, the rate of land consumption by the various uses, thereby providing indices valid in determining the future needs. Table 6 shows the quantitative distribution of land uses within the corporate area while Table 8 shows the land use consumption in terms of acres per 100 persons, values

that are valid in projecting the probable needs of the future. Table 8 shows also for purposes of comparison similar values for Orlando, Florida, and a group of 33 satellite communities used in Table 7.

TABLE 8

LAND USES IN ACRES PER 100 OF POPULATION

	<u>ACRES PER 100 PERSONS</u>		
	<u>FORT WALTON BEACH</u>	<u>ORLANDO</u>	<u>33 CITIES</u>
RESIDENTIAL	5.19	4.98	3.65
Single Family	4.87	4.41	3.14
Two Family	.11	.24	.29
Multiple Family	.22	.33	.22
COMMERCIAL	.96	.73	.22
INDUSTRIAL	.23	.32	.69
PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC	2.65	1.01	1.33

The population curve, Figure 2, indicates that Fort Walton Beach should have a population of some 30,000 persons in 1970, and 50,000 in 1980. On the basis of such growth, Table 9 shows the acreage of land that will be needed to accommodate the various use classifications. The allocation of the various uses is shown in Figure 3.

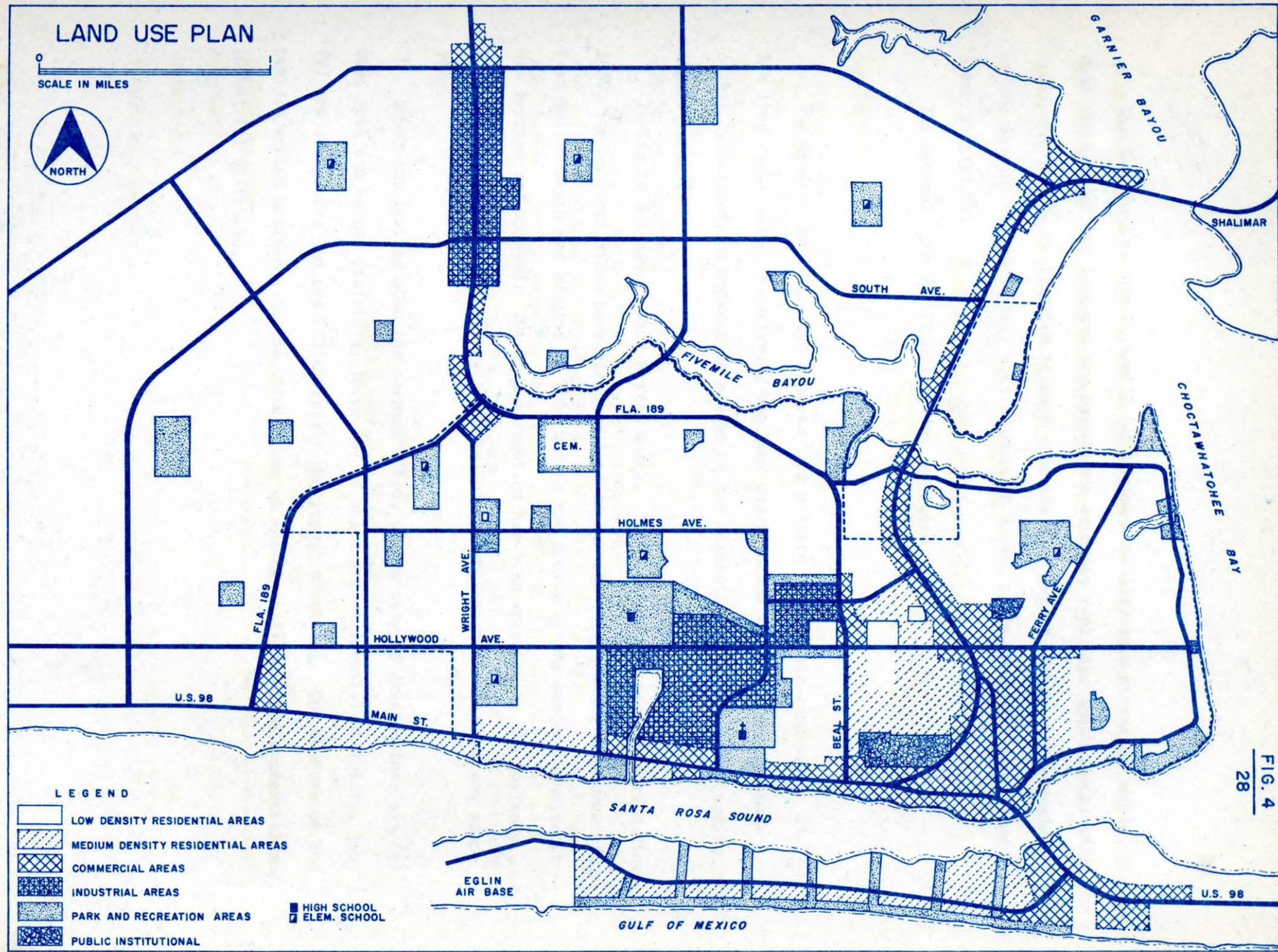
TABLE 9

FUTURE LAND USE REQUIREMENTS









<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>ACRES FOR 10,500 ADDITIONAL POPU- LATION IN THE EXISTING CORPORATE AREA</u>	<u>ACRES FOR 30,000 ADDITIONAL POPU- LATION IN AN EXTENDED URBAN AREA</u>
RESIDENTIAL	545	1,557
COMMERCIAL	101	288
PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC	278	795

LAND USE PLAN

0
SCALE IN MILES



LEGEND

-  LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREAS
-  MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREAS
-  COMMERCIAL AREAS
-  INDUSTRIAL AREAS
-  PARK AND RECREATION AREAS
-  PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL
-  HIGH SCHOOL
-  ELEM. SCHOOL

The General Land Use Plan will not become a reality as a matter of course, even tho many of its features are based upon economic realities which insure their realization. The realization of many elements will depend wholly on the desires of the people; how badly they want recreation areas, parks, marinas, public and other facilities.

The General Lane Use Plan is shown as Figure 4.

ZONING

The general land use plan represents a pattern of ultimate land uses. It is the long range look. To activate the land use plan and to attain the ultimate objective defined, dependence is placed on the regulation of land uses by zoning regulations.

Zoning is not new to Fort Walton Beach. Thru much of its growing period since 1950, zoning regulations have directed land uses. The first zoning ordinance of Fort Walton Beach was adopted in 1950 but in the course of the current studies it was revised and updated. The Plan as revised has been approved by the Advisory Planning Board and is now before the City Commission for public hearing and adoption.

Under the revised plan the corporate area of the city is divided into six (6) use, area and height districts, three (3) of which are residential districts, two (2) are commercial and one (1) wholesale and light industrial. One feature of the revised zoning ordinance is the elimination of residential uses from commercial and industrial districts.

CHAPTER IV

MAJOR STREET PLAN

"The new mobility afforded by the automobile is being neutralized by obsolete highways, lack of parking, and almost prohibitive cost of providing the capacities and designs that safe and efficient motor vehicle use demands."

"The Metropolitan Transportation Problem"
Wilfred Owen.

In 1940, there were 7.14 persons per registered automobile in Okaloosa County; in 1950, the ratio was 3.4 persons but in 1958 there were 1.3 persons per registered vehicle. Altho these figures reflect an increased population and economic activity they also reflect increased mobility and emphasize the importance and necessity of adequate channels of circulation. The street and highway system is therefore one of the most important components of the comprehensive plan; it is a structural framework around which the community develops.

In the process of community building, subdivision by subdivision, a network of streets was formed. In the absence of subdivision regulations for guidance, the streets of one subdivision were not always in alignment with those of another, or there were streets of differing widths. Then too, there were innumerable dead ends, jogs and needless reverse curves. Such deficiencies led motorists to seek out and use those streets which afforded the most direct, unobstructed traffic flow. These became the principal traveled streets and largely the basis of a major street plan.

As implied, not all streets within the city and its urban area are of equal importance as carriers of traffic; their functions differ. Some streets carrying great quantities of traffic, heavy and light, are more important than others that serve only as intersectional streets or those that serve primarily as access streets to adjoining properties. Streets of the first class are usually termed primary streets or arteries, those of the second group, are called secondary or

collector streets and those of the third group, minor streets. In the first group are found also expressways. The framework of primary and secondary streets constitute what is commonly called the Major Street Plan, sometimes called also the Arterial Street Plan. It is designed to provide rights-of-way and roadway widths adequate to handle the increasing volumes of traffic incident to them.

Altho the principal function of the street system is to provide access to properties, from various points of origin within or without the city to points of destination with ease, speed and safety, streets also serve frequently as easements for utilities and as temporary parking places. The latter use however is a terminable privilege and not a vested right. The elements of the major street framework can also act as buffered areas between residential areas and commercial or industrial areas.

FORT WALTON BEACH MAJOR STREET PLAN

The existing street pattern of Fort Walton Beach has come into being in the automobile age consequently many deficiencies found in the street system of older cities, are absent here. In defining the Major Street Plan it has been possible therefore to utilize many of the existing streets and further, extend the arterial pattern into areas contiguous to but beyond the corporate limits.

ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

Fort Walton Beach grew up around two important streets - Main Street (U. S. 98) and Florida Avenue (State 85) which with Ferry Avenue and Beal Street comprise principal streets radiating outward from the Central Business District. Main Street is an important east-west artery carrying traffic from Panama City and points east and from Pensacola and points west. Florida Avenue is the principal

MAJOR STREET PLAN

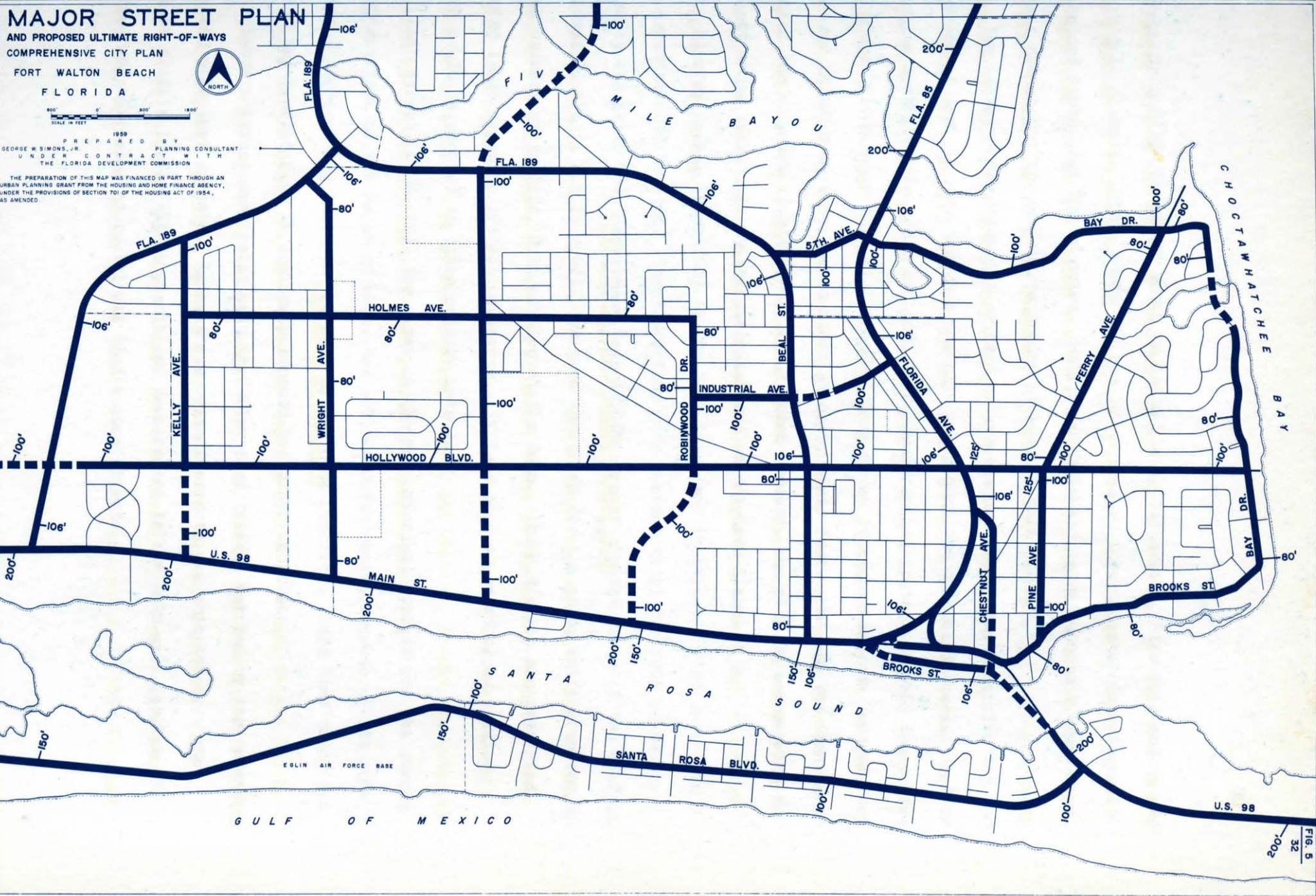
AND PROPOSED ULTIMATE RIGHT-OF-WAYS
COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLAN
FORT WALTON BEACH
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highway from U. S. 98 on the south to Eglin Field, Valparaiso, Niceville and points north into Alabama. State Roads 189 and 189 A form an intermediate circumferential route and State Road 20, an outer. Hollywood Boulevard is an important cross-town street connecting the various radiating streets (Figure 5).

The radial-circumferential pattern of streets permits a ready distribution and movement of traffic into and thru the city and around the congested areas. Traffic from the north, to the west, can utilize circumferential routes to avoid the center.

Fort Walton Beach has established rights-of-way of eighty and one hundred feet and over on major streets and on minor streets, sixty feet. Only in the older section of the city are rights-of-way constricted however, the city is endeavoring to correct these situations by the establishment of set-back lines.

Florida Avenue (State 85) is the most important traffic carrying artery in the existing major system. The twentyfour hour average total for 1958 as determined by the State Road Department, was 11,000 cars at a point north of the Central Business District. It is a well designed thorofare for the safe, swift movement of large volumes of traffic, with parking at the curb. The mid strip and left hand turning lanes expedite traffic movements. It is a good standard cross section which could be adopted to other primary arteries.

Main Street (U. S. 98), the older of the two principal streets and the second most important of the major streets, has serious deficiencies because of its constricted right-of-way width in the Central Business District. Left hand turns are marked but traffic flow is seriously impeded by parked vehicles.

Figure 6 illustrates relatively the volumes of traffic carried by the several existing principal streets. Altho these present streets are able to carry the present traffic loads, future growth and development in the area will require the improvement of these and additional high volume streets.

1958 TRAFFIC FLOW DIAGRAM

24 HOUR ANNUAL AVERAGE

COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLAN

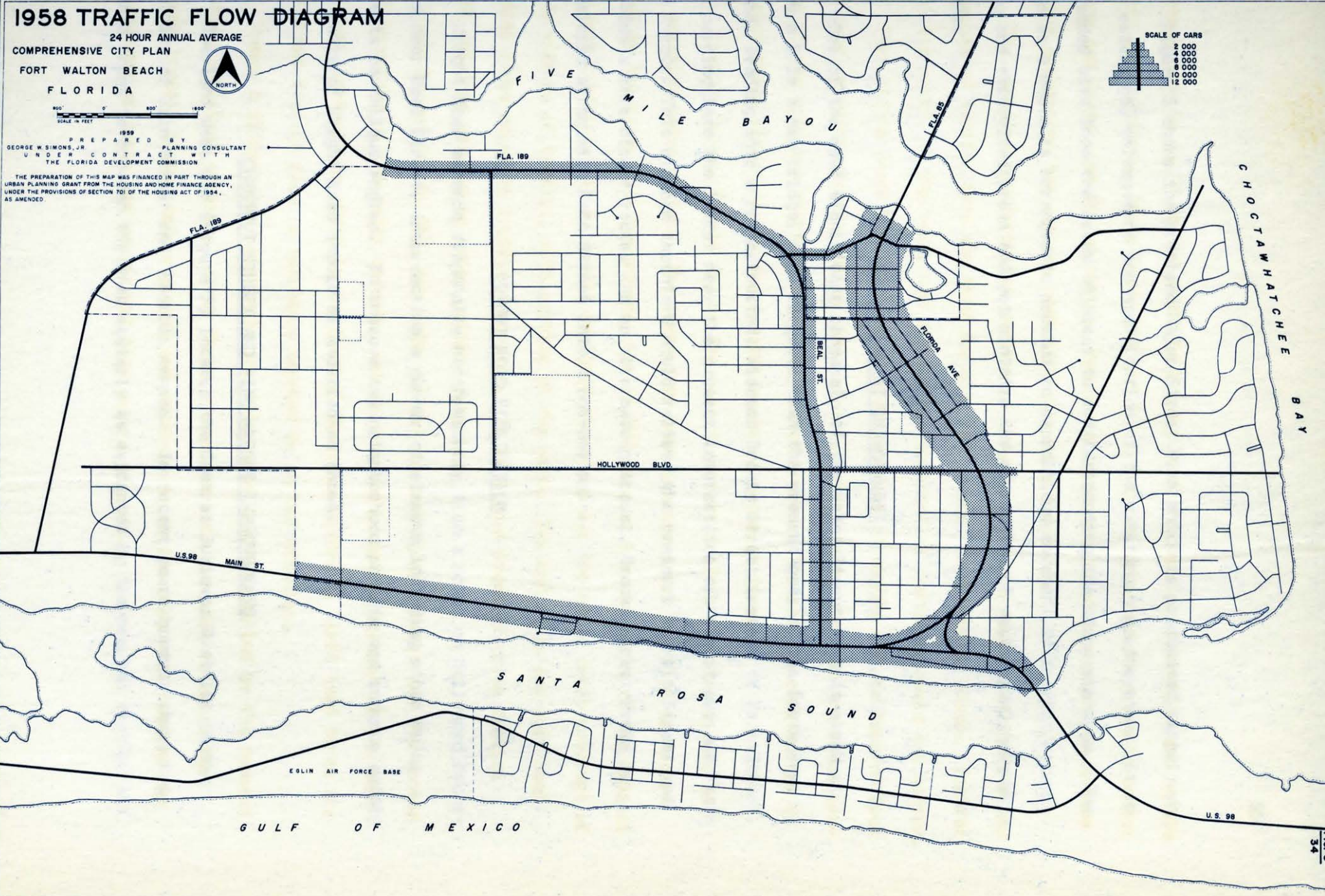
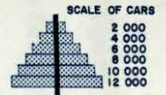
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CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY

GULF OF MEXICO

Figure 5 shows the proposed Major Street Plan which is predicated largely on the extension, enlargement and modification of the existing street system. It is extended also into the areas adjacent to and surrounding the corporate area. The plan as a whole is arranged to provide an expeditious movement of traffic volume into and thru vital areas and yet minimize the disruption of residential neighborhoods.

BROOKS STREET IMPROVEMENT

One of the most significant proposals of the Major Street Plan as shown in Figure 5 is a new bridge, more adequate than the present one, across Santa Rosa Sound, leading into a reconstructed, widened Brooks Street instead of Main Street, but merging into the latter near the present intersection of Main Street and Florida Avenue. This widened thoroughfare would relieve the pressure on Main Street and provide a more direct route. As an alternate proposal, Brooks Street could be developed along with Main Street into a one-way pair.

WRIGHT ROAD ELIMINATION

Wright Road extends diagonally northwesterly from a point on Hollywood Boulevard near Beal Street, intersecting a number of streets including other major streets on oblique angles. To improve the neighborhood pattern and enhance safety the route of Wright Road should be modified as shown.

CHESTNUT STREET AND PINE AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS

The land uses map (Figure 3) locates the Central Business District in the vicinity of Main Street and Florida Avenue. In recent years however there has been a trend to broaden the area easterly as evidenced by the new bus station and

new bank and other construction. In recognition of this trend and also to provide for future requirements, the Land Use Plan (Figure 3) defines the Central Business District as a broadened north-south rectangle with Chestnut Avenue converted into an important connecting street between the proposed Brooks Street and Florida Avenue. This improvement will necessitate the acquisition of a right-of-way south of First Street to Brooks and also the widening of Chestnut Avenue at its juncture with Florida Avenue.

To facilitate traffic movements into the residential areas located east of Florida Avenue from the south a connection is proposed between Main Street and Pine Avenue thereby converting Pine Avenue into a street connecting with Ferry Avenue at Hollywood Boulevard.

FERRY AVENUE

It is further proposed to close those diagonal sections of Ferry Avenue from Hollywood Boulevard to Chestnut Avenue, between Oak and Second Street.

With these various improvements and additions the easterly portion of Fort Walton Beach will be adequately provided with major thoroughfares to serve the people and simultaneously enhance the value of the residential neighborhoods. Bay Drive on the north and east and Brooks Street constitute elements in the outer circumferential of the easterly portion of the city.

BEAL STREET AND STATE ROAD #189

Beal Street indicated as a major north-south artery west of Florida Avenue leading into State Road #189 which extended westerly connects with a westerly leg of #189 extended southerly into U. S. 98 near Mary Esther. #189 also swings northward to Eglin Field. This series of roads provides an intermediate circumferential

route serving the residential lands bordering Five Mile Bayou and south thereof.

Westerly of Beal Street the right-of-way of an unnamed street is utilized as the base of another north-south artery extending from Main Street on the south to #189 on the north and thence northward across the bayou. Westerly of this latter road two additional north-south arteries are proposed, one primary and the other, secondary. The latter is Kelley Avenue.

HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD

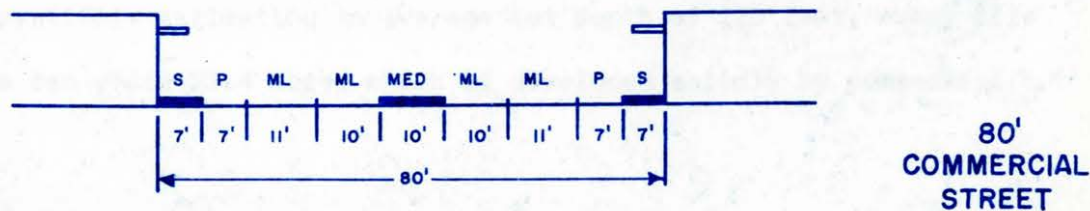
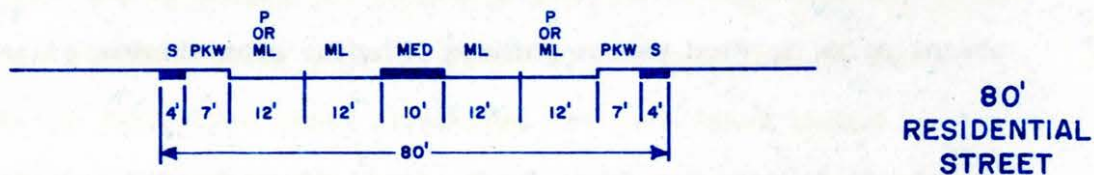
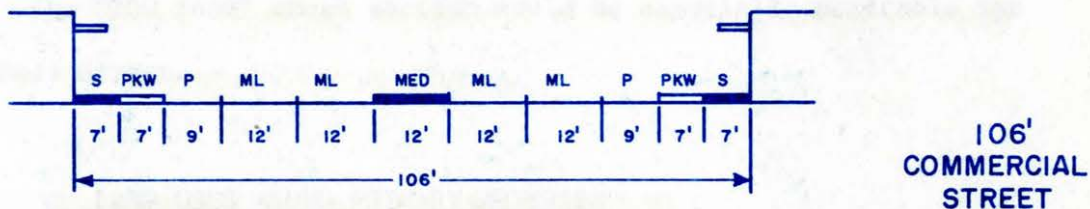
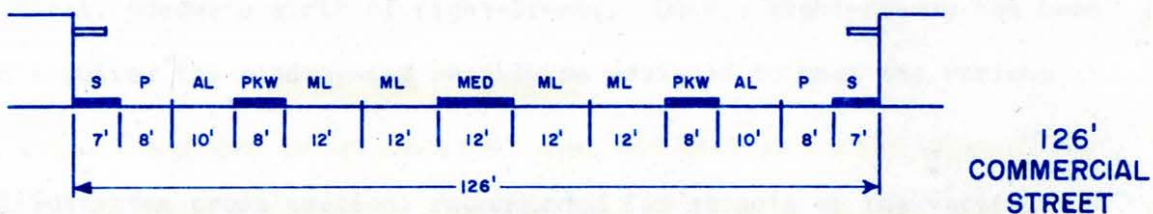
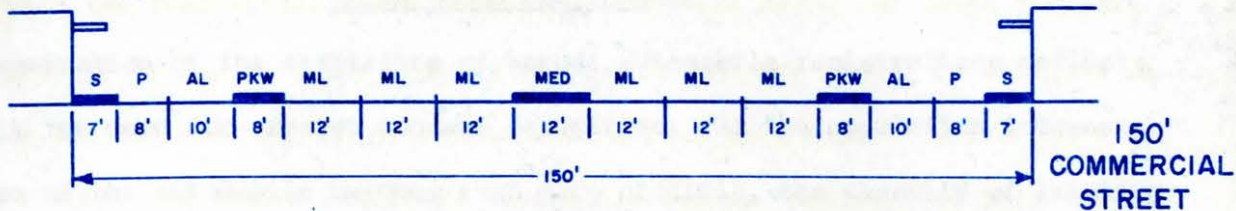
Altho Hollywood Boulevard is an important east and west thorofare thruout the corporate area, it is given a secondary position east of Florida Avenue and primary, westerly thereof, because most of the traffic it will carry easterly will be to or from the residential areas. Westerly of Florida Avenue however Hollywood Boulevard becomes increasingly important especially with the development of business and industry in the area west of Beal Street.

RIGHT-OF-WAY AND ROADWAY CROSS SECTIONS

Figure 7 illustrates suggested cross sections to be established in the Major Street Plan. In general, primary arteries should be developed on rights-of-way of not less than 106 feet and secondary and collector streets on rights-of-way of not less than 80 feet and minimum access streets should be not less than 60 feet. Where rights-of-way now fall below these standards, set back lines should be established by ordinance to protect the right-of-way against unfavorable encroachment in the future.

SUGGESTED STREET CROSS-SECTIONS FOR FORT WALTON BEACH

ML = MOVING LANE
 AL = ACCESS LANE
 P = PARKING LANE
 PKW = PARKWAY SEPARATOR
 MED = MEDIAN STRIP AND LEFT TURN LANE



MAJOR CROSS SECTIONS

An examination of the statistics of annual automobile registrations reflects immediately the need for greater roadway capacities. As the population increases and the use of the automobile becomes even more prolific, the capacity of existing thoroughfares will result in increased congestion and hazard. Therefore, in anticipating any system of major streets and highways, capacity must be considered and capacity means first, adequate width of right-of-way. Once a right-of-way has been established and acquired the roadway can readily be designed to meet the various needs.

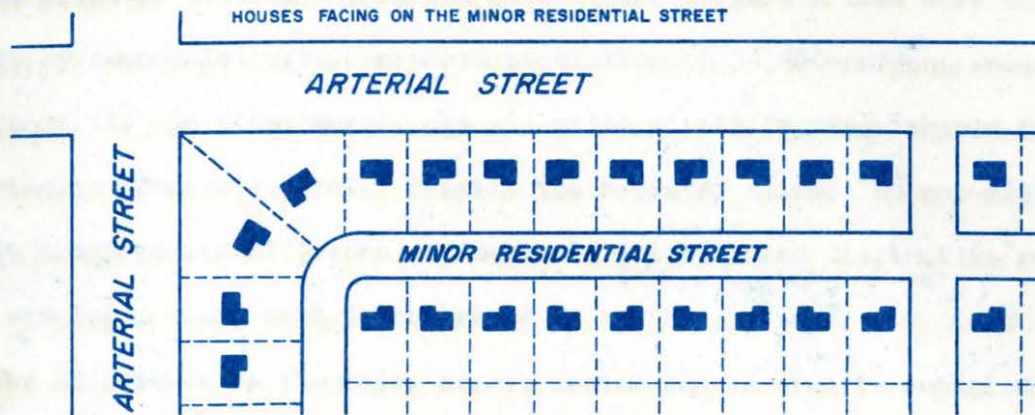
Figure 7 illustrates cross sections recommended for streets of the various types. These cross sections exceed those used in many places but they are consistent with the pattern already established in Fort Walton Beach, which are of generous proportions. The "150 foot" cross section would be especially desirable for U. S. 98, west of Beal Street.

LAND USES ALONG PRIMARY ARTERIES

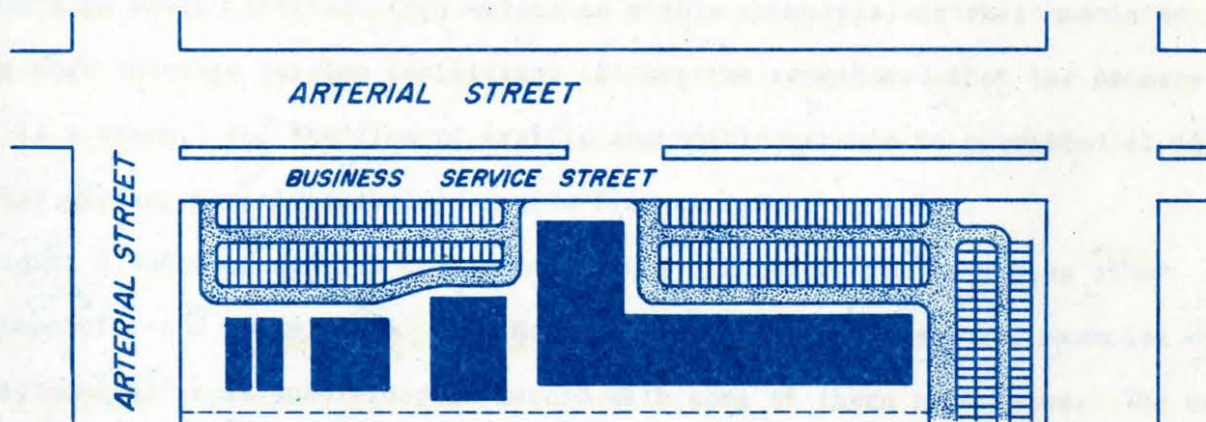
The purpose of the Major Street Plan as a system of coordinated streets is to afford an expeditious and safe movement of large volumes of traffic into, thru and about the city. It is not established - as many think, to provide additional commercial frontage nor to provide more curbside parking spaces both of which impede the flow of traffic.

The land use studies have shown that only about seven per cent of the developed area of Fort Walton Beach is now used for commercial purposes, which is equivalent to 0.96 acres per 100 persons in the population. Deducting street intersections and conservatively estimating an average lot depth of 120 feet, every mile of highway frontage can yield 23.4 acres which if developed solidly by commercial

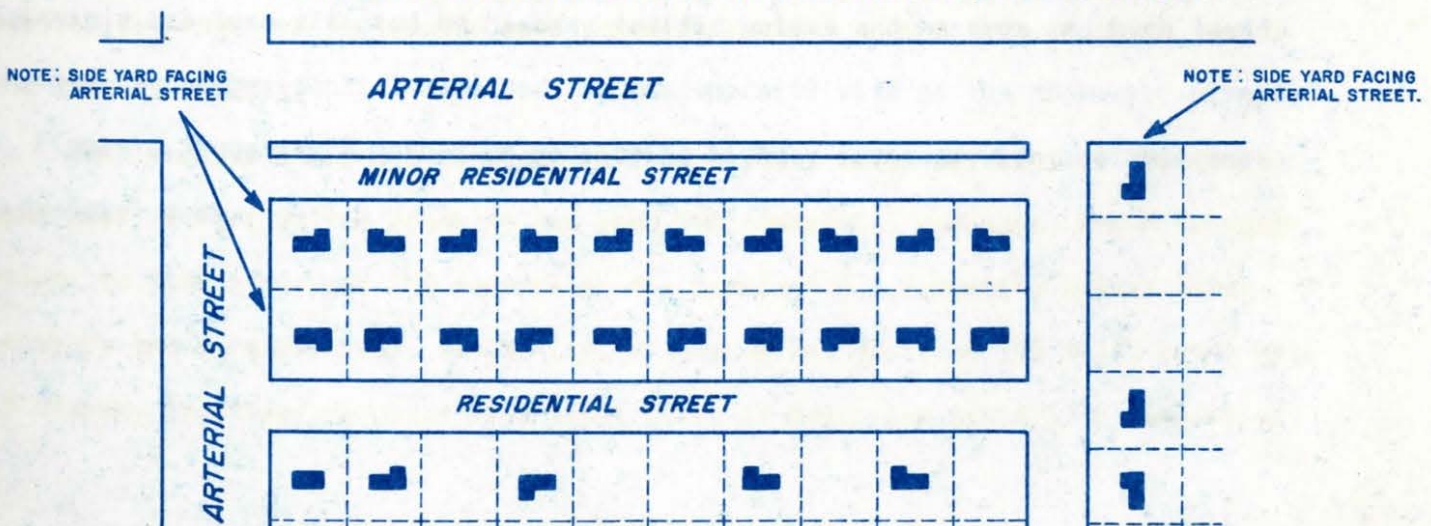
EXAMPLE "A" — RESIDENTIAL AREAS WITH REVERSED FRONTAGE



EXAMPLE "B" — COMMERCIAL AREAS WITH PARALLEL SERVICE STREET



EXAMPLE "C" — RESIDENTIAL AREAS WITH RESIDENTIAL SERVICE STREETS
PARALLEL TO ARTERIAL STREETS OR INTERSECTING ARTERIAL STREETS



uses would support a population of 2,437 persons. Or, if the 14 miles of existing highway frontage located within one mile of the corporate area were developed solidly by commercial uses, an urban population of 34,000 persons would be required to support it. In other words, not all major street frontage should be allocated by zoning to commercial uses. Despite the repeated cliché "no one will live on a heavily traveled street", some of America's colorful and distinctive residential areas are found along such thoroughfares.

The efficiency of the major street system can be greatly enhanced by encouraging the treatment portrayed in Figure 8. The construction of access roads parallel to the primary arteries will be helpful in removing from the primary artery much needless slow moving traffic; they will also enable commercial establishments to provide more adequate parking facilities. It must be remembered that the primary artery is a channel for the flow of traffic and nothing should be permitted along the walls of the channel (curbs) to impede flow or reduce capacity.

Figure 8 suggests ways of developing highway frontages for land uses other than commercial and industrial. Fort Walton Beach has already several examples of good residential areas subdivided in accord with some of these principles. The use of Example A, Figure 8, for reverse frontage platting of residential areas is particularly encouraged for the Fort Walton Beach area. Subdivisions platted on this principle are less affected by highway traffic noises and hazards and much less injured by non-residential land uses on the opposite side of the highway. Example B, Figure 8, suggests a method of developing highway frontage with business and industrial uses.

CHAPTER V

THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

"The absence of the sense of neighborhood or community in modern life poses a serious problem for the preservation of our American democracy. Individuality and social responsibility have developed, historically, in the neighborhoods where men lived and were best known".

"The Neighborhood Unit Plan" - Dahir.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Plan is to organize the residential areas of the city in so far as practicable, into compact units for which public facilities can be efficiently planned. Permanent boundaries are selected that conform to heavily traveled arterial streets, large water bodies, or any other separator that will itself remain non-residential in character. The objective of the Neighborhood Plan is to design good living areas that can maintain their integrity for residential use.

In general, a theoretical neighborhood is an aggregate of residential areas limited in size, depending upon population density, to accommodate from 1,000 to 2,000 families, which is usually required to support one elementary school. In the center of such neighborhood the elementary school, playground and park are located. Further, the idealized neighborhood should be fringed by arterial streets, green belts or other natural barriers to isolate it somewhat from any commercial or industrial areas. The internal streets of a neighborhood are designed solely for local traffic movement, but there should be one or two collector streets to feed traffic into the arterial street system.

If the neighborhood is compactly arranged with a school near its center, maximum safety is afforded children walking to and from school, playground or park. Churches, neighborhood shopping centers and other community service facilities are usually located on the fringe of the residential areas, conveniently located to serve several neighborhoods.

A sample survey was made in a number of the new subdivisions of Fort Walton Beach to determine the population characteristics of neighborhoods. There was very little difference in age characteristics from one section of the city to another. There are an average of 4.2 persons per household, which is extremely high and reflects the youth of the population. The age distribution is as follows: about 18% are five years of age or under; about 23% are six thru eleven years; about 9% are twelve thru fourteen and about 2% are fifteen thru seventeen years of age. This sample is valid only as it applies to the homogeneous residential areas in new subdivisions; however, approximately 90% of the white population of the city is in this category.

This information indicates that neighborhood facilities should be concentrated on the young age group at this time for schools and playgrounds. For the next five years or more the main pressure on the school system will be in the elementary grades; playgrounds should be developed for the same age group and for the pre-school age group. Accordingly, it is important that these facilities be within walking distance of all homes in so far as practical.

In subsequent years, as the population ages, the impact upon the school system will doubtless shift first to the junior high school grades and then to the senior high grades. Recreation facilities can then be redesigned to place more emphasis on these age groups.

The following table indicates the current population estimate and age grouping for each proposed neighborhood. Also included is a prediction of the ultimate population that can be accommodated and an estimate of the age grouping, based upon current trends.

TABLE 10

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF FORT WALTON
BEACH'S NEIGHBORHOODS, PRESENT AND POTENTIAL*

<u>NEIGHBORHOOD</u>	<u>TOTAL POPULATION</u>	<u>NUMBER AGE 0-5</u>	<u>NUMBER AGE 6-11</u>	<u>NUMBER AGE 12-14</u>	<u>NUMBER AGE 15-17</u>
Westwood - 1959	412	74	95	37	8
- potential	9,572	1,722	2,248	879	195
West Side - 1959	1,932	348	444	174	39
- potential	4,524	814	1,000	407	90
East Side - 1959	3,746	674	862	337	75
- potential	6,124	1,102	1,409	551	122
Bay Street - 1959	1,391	250	320	125	28
- potential	1,700	306	391	153	34
Central White - 1959	1,224	184	184	86	86
- potential	2,226	330	330	154	154
Central Non-White - 1959	1,318	not known	-----	-----	-----
- potential	2,125	286	286	84	63

*The potential is estimated according to present ratios of persons per household. In as much as these ratios, and particularly ratios of age groups to the total population, will change as the neighborhood ages, these estimates are likely to be valid only over the next five years or so. They represent the maximum potential likely to be expected of each neighborhood while it is young.

To be practical and most effective, the Neighborhood Plan can be used as a guide by a number of agencies: the City and County in the development of the arterial street system and in the acquisition of parks and recreation sites; by the Advisory Planning Board in the administration of subdivision control and design; the Board of Public Instruction in the acquisition and development of school sites; by the various churches to determine the necessity of expansion into fringe areas and by the developers in the design of subdivision street patterns; and in the reservation of sites for schools and parks. The Land Use Plan is a general guide for the extension of the Neighborhood Plan into the surrounding urban area outside the present corporate limits.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

A system of neighborhood parks and playgrounds is basic to the neighborhood plan. It is generally desirable to develop the main neighborhood playground in conjunction with the elementary school, which has the advantage of utilizing school sites for the city recreational program and at the same time, enables the joint use of facilities by the schools. Every residential area should be within at least one-half mile of a major neighborhood playground. It is also desirable to provide a landscaped park for passive recreation within each neighborhood.

Minimum nationally recognized standards suggest that each neighborhood have one and one-half acres of park and recreation area per 1,000 population; school playgrounds may be credited. Fortunately, Fort Walton Beach has an excellent public attitude toward the acquisition of adequate park and recreation areas and these minimum standards are exceeded. Subdivision regulations require a donation of four per cent of the area for public parks, a policy that has put Fort Walton Beach in a very favorable position. One deficiency, however, has resulted. Some park donations are too small to be useful for the purpose intended. Altho the total area found within the neighborhood may exceed the minimum requirement, one or several of the sites may be much too small for practical use. A minimum site of three and one-fourth acres with a rectangular shape having the smallest dimension not less than 350 feet is suggested. Whenever possible, developers should be encouraged to consolidate their contributions in order to meet the minimum or higher site standards. It would be much more desirable to get all park contributions in areas of five to ten acres.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYLOT

AN AREA INTENDED FOR ACTIVE RECREATION FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN. ITS MAJOR USE IS AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR BACK YARDS WHERE PLAY OPPORTUNITIES ARE RARELY AVAILABLE, SUCH AS IN CONGESTED DISTRICTS AND IN THE APARTMENT DEVELOPMENTS.

THE SIZE OF A PLAYLOT SHOULD BE ABOUT 1,500 TO 5,000 SQUARE FEET. ABOUT THE SIZE OF AN AVERAGE SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL LOT.

A PLAYLOT SHOULD BE LOCATED ONE TO EACH BLOCK IN CONGESTED AREAS - ONE FOR EVERY 300-700 PEOPLE.



FACILITIES

FIG. 9

46

LARGER HOME GROUNDS
NEARBY CHILDRENS NURSERIES
PLAYLOTS

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYGROUND

AN AREA FOR ACTIVE RECREATION FOR CHILDREN 5 TO 15 YEARS OLD. IT MAY, IN ADDITION, PROVIDE A SMALL AREA FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN, AND FACILITIES WHICH MAY BE USED UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS BY YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS.

THE SIZE OF A PLAYGROUND SHOULD BE 3 TO 7 ACRES. THE SITE SHOULD NOT BE LOCATED ALONG HEAVILY-TRAVELED STREETS OR RAILROADS. CHILDREN SHOULD BE ABLE TO REACH THE SITE WITHOUT BEING EXPOSED TO ANY SPECIAL HAZARDS.

CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO WALK MORE THAN 1/2 MILE TO REACH A PLAYGROUND.



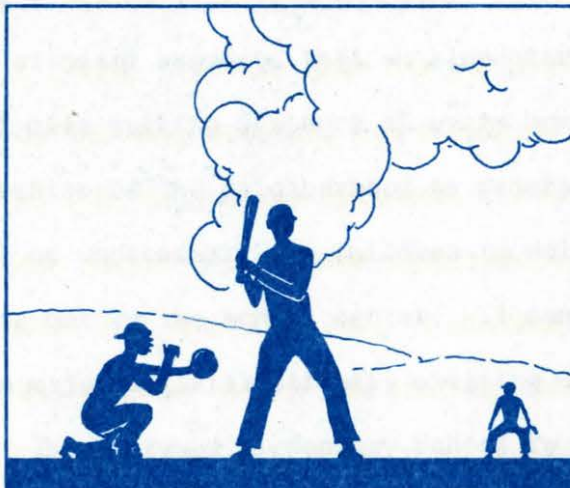
PLAY AREAS IN PARKS
SWIMMING POOLS
HOME GROUNDS
ZOOS
BOY & GIRL SCOUT CAMPS
SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS
PLAYGROUNDS FOR ATHLETICS
COMMUNITY CENTERS
OUTLYING NATURALISTIC PARKS
MUSEUMS

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYFIELD

AN AREA FOR ACTIVE ORGANIZED PLAY FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULTS, AGES 15 AND OVER. A SMALL SECTION SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AS A CHILDRENS PLAY AREA.

THE SIZE OF A PLAYFIELD SHOULD BE 10 TO 30 ACRES.

PLAYFIELDS SHOULD BE LOCATED WITHIN 1/2 TO 1 MILE WALKING DISTANCE FROM EVERY HOME.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

AN AREA FOR PASSIVE RECREATION FOR ALL AGES. A RELATIVELY SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD PARK AREA AND PRIMARILY INTENDED TO PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOOD SETTING AND TO AFFORD A PLACE FOR QUIET, PASSIVE RECREATION.



SCENIC DRIVES
PLAYFIELDS
SWIMMING POOLS
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
COMMUNITY CENTERS
LARGE PARKS
RESERVATIONS - FOREST PRESERVES
MUSEUMS & ZOOS
FISHING & BOATING
BRIDLE & NATURE TRAILS

THE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

Recommendations regarding schools are limited in this report to the adequacy of structures, the size of sites and their locations. The size of a school plant and its site should be based upon the long range population estimate of the neighborhood. Because of the aging process of neighborhoods however, school plants should not be designed to meet the peak demand of the neighborhood while it is very young. As the neighborhood ages, the number of children of elementary school age will decline resulting in a surplus of classroom capacity.

To meet the pressures of peak demand the use of temporary classroom structures and transporting of students to schools with surplus capacity is recommended but such practices should be regarded only as temporary measures. Ultimately each neighborhood unit will have its own elementary school designed to meet its long range population requirements.

A universally recognized standard suggests that an elementary school be located within at least one-half mile walking distance of every home. If elementary schools are located near the center of the neighborhood as generally proposed in the Neighborhood Plan, it will be unnecessary for children to walk excessive distances or cross busy streets to get to the school center. It cannot be stressed too strongly that locations on major arterial streets, existing or proposed, should be avoided whenever possible. The Westwood Elementary School is a good example of a well located school with respect to its potential service area; altho there are at this time very few homes within a half-mile radius. The Oakland Heights Elementary School is an example of a poorly located school with respect to its potential neighborhood service area; furthermore, this school is located on a major arterial highway which will become more hazardous as the urban area develops.

NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERN

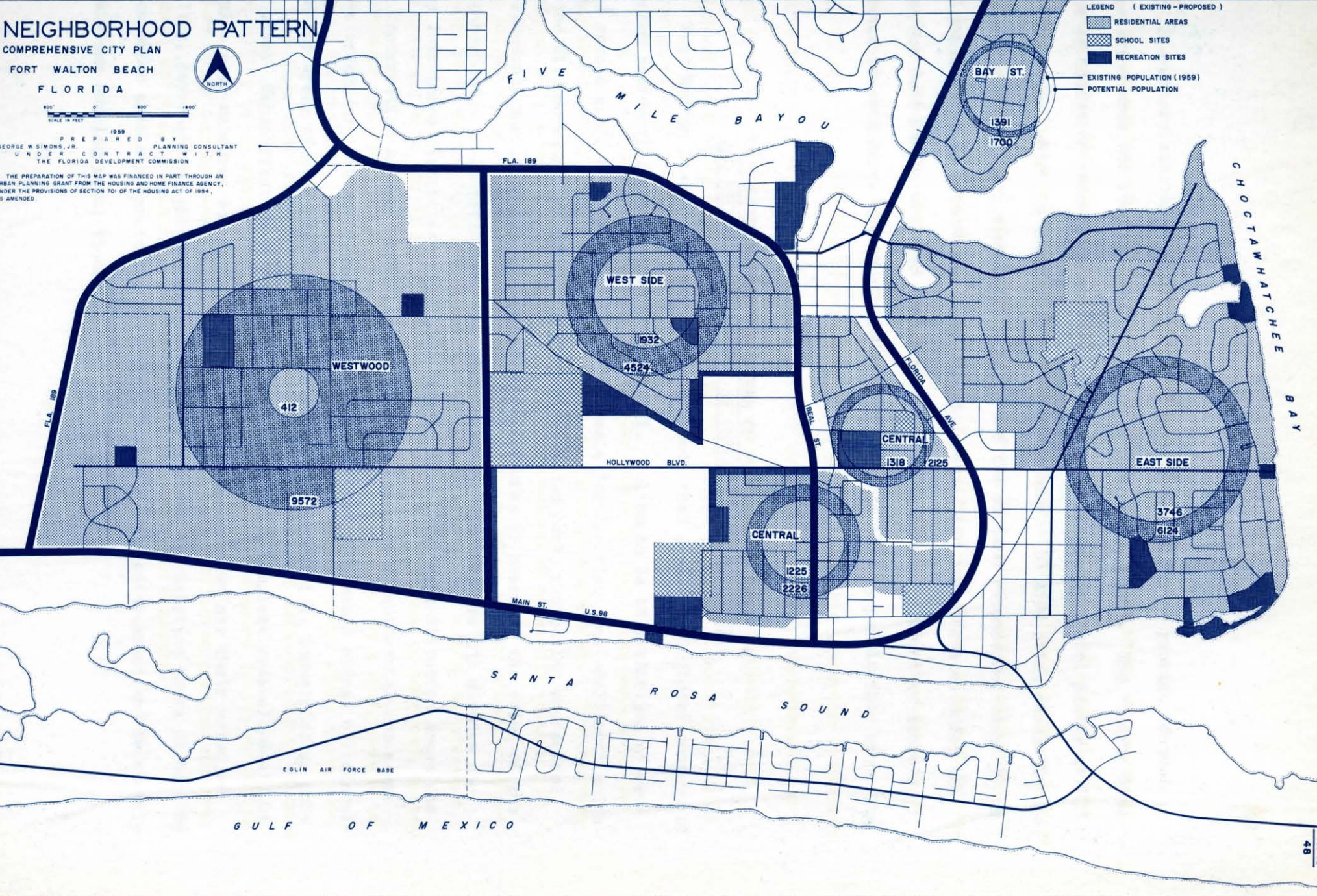
COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLAN
FORT WALTON BEACH
FLORIDA



1959
PREPARED BY PLANNING CONSULTANT
GEORGE W. SIMONS, JR.
UNDER CONTRACT WITH
THE FLORIDA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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

- LEGEND (EXISTING - PROPOSED)
- RESIDENTIAL AREAS
 - SCHOOL SITES
 - RECREATION SITES
 - EXISTING POPULATION (1959)
 - POTENTIAL POPULATION



Elementary schools should be located on adequate sites to provide adequate recreation area and room for the expansion of the school plant. The Florida Department of Education recommends at least fifteen acre sites for school plants of 720 to 840 pupils, which is the maximum size recommended. 10 acre sites should be obtained for the smaller elementary schools and the minimum recommended capacity is 480 pupils. It is recommended that park and recreation areas donated under the Four Per Cent Law be utilized also for the establishment of elementary schools located in accordance with the neighborhood plan, if this is permissible under the law.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERN OF FORT WALTON BEACH
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS

Fort Walton Beach has several neighborhoods that approach the ideal concept of planned residential neighborhoods (Figure 10). Following is an evaluation of several recognizable neighborhood units, proposals for creating some additional units as the city develops and proposals for neighborhood park, recreation and school improvements and proposals for conservation measures to preserve the value of the neighborhood. A map reflecting the Area Treatment Plan (Figure 11) divides the city into three districts: (1) Redevelopment Areas, (2) Rehabilitation Areas and (3) Conservation Areas. Redevelopment Areas suggest these residential areas are sub-standard or located in an area of mixed land uses and should either be redeveloped for areas of standard homes or redeveloped for commercial, industrial or public uses. Rehabilitation Areas are those not requiring complete redevelopment but require some measures to eliminate blighting influences that mar their value as healthy, permanent neighborhoods. Conservation Areas are existing areas of healthy homes which should be protected by zoning, building code enforcement and eventually by minimum housing regulations.

AREA TREATMENT PLAN

COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLAN

FORT WALTON BEACH

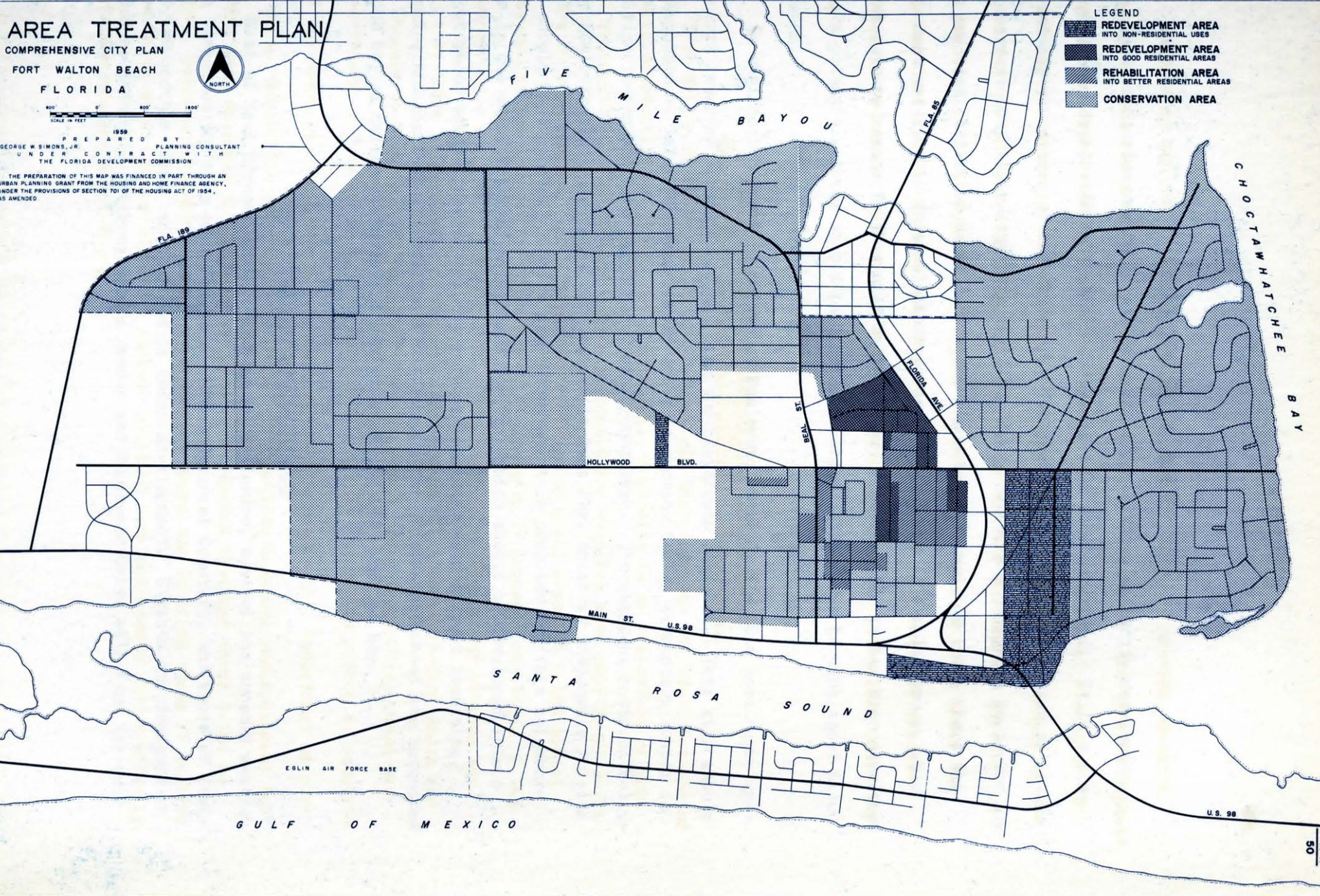
FLORIDA



1955
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- LEGEND
- REDEVELOPMENT AREA INTO NON-RESIDENTIAL USES
 - REDEVELOPMENT AREA INTO GOOD RESIDENTIAL AREAS
 - REHABILITATION AREA INTO BETTER RESIDENTIAL AREAS
 - CONSERVATION AREA



EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

East of Florida Avenue (State Road 85) lies a large, compactly developed neighborhood designated in Figure 9 as the East Side Neighborhood. It is a comparatively young area of the city, well designed for a neighborhood plan of internal streets that discourage thru traffic. Ferry Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard are its principal collector streets. At the time of the survey, in 1959, there were 892 homes existing in this neighborhood area. Based upon a sample survey, about 3,746 persons reside in this area at this time; however, when it has been developed to its potential, there should be a total of about 1,531 homes housing about 6,100 persons.

In the section north of Hollywood Boulevard there is the 20.6 acre Ferry Avenue Park reserved for neighborhood park and playground purposes. This site should be expanded at least five and a half acres to provide for an elementary school in addition to the park and neighborhood playground area. The sections south of Hollywood Boulevard has in it the 2.5 acre Villa Russ Park which is inadequate in size and should be expanded. A major park improvement is proposed for this neighborhood in the acquisition of Elliot's Point Park which should be developed into a neighborhood scenic park with limited recreation use, such as boat launching, swimming and picnicing. Additional small parks for this neighborhood are suggested on the Bay at Hollywood Boulevard and on Goodthing Lake and the Bay.

WEST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

West of Beal Street, north of Hollywood Boulevard, east of the unnamed section line street at the east property line of Beal Memorial Cemetery, and south of State Road 189 another large neighborhood is under development. Streets are designed on a good neighborhood pattern; Holmes Avenue and Robinwood Drive will form the main

collector streets. At the time of survey there were 460 homes existing which accommodated about 1,932 persons. When developed to its potential there should be about 1,131 homes housing some 4,524 persons.

A major problem affecting the long range stability of this neighborhood confronts the community because of industrial and heavy commercial development adjacent to it. The Land Use Plan suggests an extension of the existing industrial area, also means for the separation of residential and industrial areas by the use of public parks, playgrounds, school properties and park buffer strips. See Figure 4 (Land Use Plan) and Figure 10 (Neighborhood Plan).

Three small neighborhood park areas have been reserved for this neighborhood of 2.1, 1.8 and 4.7 acres. Altho minimum requirements for park area in this neighborhood are now satisfied, two of the three sites are of substandard size. It is proposed that the largest site of 4.7 acres be enlarged and combined with an elementary school site of about 15 acres. If this is accomplished it would be feasible to eliminate the small park site located on Maurice Street of 2.1 acres. The site on Bayou Wood Drive of 1.8 acres should be enlarged to $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres. In addition, it would be very desirable to acquire for a small neighborhood playground the block bounded by Robinwood Drive, Highlands Street and Holmes Avenue. All of these proposals are indicated on the Neighborhood Plan Map, Figure 10.

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

The Westwood Neighborhood as herein delineated is bounded by State Road 189 on the north and west, by Main Street (U. S. 98) on the south and by the unnamed section line street east of the Beal Memorial Cemetery property on the east. At the present time there are only about 98 homes existing in the entire area but a very large tract has been subdivided and currently is being developed. Two

elementary schools, Oakland Heights and Westwood, are located within this neighborhood on sites of 19.28 acres and 22.04 acres, respectively. Altho there is very little population within this neighborhood at the present time to support these schools the picture will change over the next five or ten years. Ultimately there should be about 2,393 homes housing a population of about 9,572, compared to a present population of about 412.

The Land Use Plan proposes the extension of the industrial area to the eastern boundary of this neighborhood. Care must be taken however to buffer the neighborhood from the adjacent industrial and heavy commercial land uses. Already reserved within this neighborhood is a park area of 9.08 acres. In addition to this and the school playgrounds there is a 7.46 acre site of the retarded children's school, where recreation facilities can be developed. It should be noted that the proposed neighborhood boundaries include an area not included at the present time within the corporate area.

Minimum park requirements of 15 acres are exceeded if the school playground properties are included. However, this very large neighborhood should acquire two additional small playgrounds of not less than $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres each, as indicated on the Neighborhoods and Parks maps (Figures 10 and 12). Playground facilities should be developed in so far as possible on the two elementary school sites. It is suggested further that the 9.08 park site bounded by Holmes Avenue, Rogers Avenue, and Audrey Drive be developed as a landscaped park rather than an active recreation area.

BAY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD

This neighborhood is bounded by State Road 85 and by Choctawhatchee Bay. It includes an area of 248 homes housing about 1,042 persons within the corporate area but within the entire area is a population of about 1,400. There is a potential

within the defined area of about 1,700 persons, which is too small to support an elementary school of the minimum recommended size. This neighborhood has a park site of 1.5 acres, but it cannot be enlarged to provide the minimum $3\frac{1}{4}$ acre site for a neighborhood playground. It is recommended therefore that this site be developed as a landscaped park with limited recreational facilities for very young children and an additional $3\frac{1}{4}$ acre playground be acquired in the vicinity of South Avenue, as indicated on the map, Figure 10.

THE CENTRAL RESIDENTIAL AREA

The central older area of the city is not organized along a neighborhood pattern, but notwithstanding there exists in it a sizeable residential area that can benefit from a neighborhood plan. The area under consideration includes those residential areas west of Florida Avenue (State Road 85), north of Main Street, and east of Beal Street. Within this area are found most of the City's duplex and multiple family dwellings but predominantly it is a single family area of small lots. Mixed land uses, particularly in the vicinity of Beal Street present a problem that threatens the area's long range stability for residential use.

There is a tendency in the community to look at this section as a transitional area that will ultimately be redeveloped for business. This is a rather unrealistic attitude, because the area is much too large to ever be absorbed fully by commercial uses. Business development will tend to gravitate more to that area just east of Florida Avenue and north of Main Street where ample vacant land is available for the city's future commercial expansion. The history of cities generally shows that problem housing areas surrounding business districts do not readily redevelop into good commercial areas but instead become slum housing districts. It is suggested that the community adopt a policy of halting any further mixing of land uses and plan to eliminate those that exist in years to come.

The central area should be planned in so far as possible for two neighborhoods (see Figure 10) and various measures can be taken to insure their respective stability for the future.

THE CENTRAL WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Central White Neighborhood, as delineated on the Neighborhood Plan map, contains at this time some 350 homes accommodating about 1,225 persons. About 286 additional lots are possible within the area to ultimately house a white population of about 2,226 persons. The area is served by an elementary school.

A portion of the school site should be developed as a neighborhood playground. The section of this neighborhood lying west of Beal Street should be served by another playground and park developed on part of the city property of the disposal plant tract. The site proposed in Figure 10 would also serve to buffer the neighborhood from adjacent industrial properties and the sewage treatment property.

THE CENTRAL NON-WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Central Non-White Neighborhood which contains at the present some 1,318 persons, might ultimately accommodate some 2,125 population based upon present housing trends. Within this neighborhood are found practically all the city's substandard dwellings. Altho many dwellings are substandard or in generally poor condition, many new homes of good quality have been developed thruout the neighborhood particularly in the area north of Hollywood Boulevard. The neighborhood has an elementary school but the site of 2.06 acres is substandard. Fortunately, within a block of the school is a 9.2 acre park developed as the non-white recreation center.

OTHER RESIDENTIAL AREAS

In addition to the foregoing neighborhoods, there are several detached residential areas too small to be included in the neighborhood plan. Some of these areas will eventually be absorbed by the expanding commercial areas but others may continue in residential use. One such area is found on the south side of U. S. Highway 98 (Main Street), where about 417 persons live. Another such area that does not lend itself to the neighborhood pattern, lies between State Road 189 and Five Mile Bayou; about 179 persons live in this area. Another area, found east of Florida Avenue south of Hollywood Boulevard and west of Pine Avenue, which accommodates about 511 persons, may ultimately be absorbed by the expanding business district.

From this it can be seen that 90% of the city's population lives within residential areas proposed for permanent neighborhoods. There is an excellent opportunity for Fort Walton Beach to develop good sound, liveable neighborhoods of lasting stability with all of the conveniences of our idealized neighborhood concept.

HIGH SCHOOL FACILITIES AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

In addition to the neighborhood elementary schools, a junior and senior high school will be required in the future to service the several neighborhoods of Fort Walton Beach. When the population within the existing corporate area of Fort Walton Beach exceeds 20,000 there will probably be about 1,000 junior high and 800 senior high school pupils. Because senior high schools can be efficiently designed for as many as 1,500 pupils, it will be desirable to service an additional urban area beyond the existing corporate limits. However, junior high schools generally should be designed for 800 to 1,200 pupils.

The site suggested for the junior and senior high school is indicated on the Land Use Plan, Figure 4, and also the Neighborhood Plan, Figure 10. The proposed site includes 50 acres, about 25 acres of which should be devoted to playfields and recreation areas. This site is proposed because it is centrally located to service all of the city's neighborhoods and is most convenient to the area of greatest population potential. This site also offers a buffer between proposed industrial areas and surrounding residential areas. Most of the land required for this site is already owned by the city as part of the dump property used in a land fill operation.

PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Park and recreation facilities occupy a definite place in the growth pattern of the city and its urban area. They contribute immeasurably to the building of a better citizenship among the youth of the community and also cultivate an improved civic consciousness among adults and visitors. In communities predominantly identified with tourism and recreation, the necessity of neighborhood facilities is sometimes overlooked, but this has not been altogether true in Fort Walton Beach.

EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS

Table 11, Park and Recreation Areas existing in Fort Walton Beach, shows that some 25 acres are currently allocated to park and recreation facilities, exclusive of beach areas. Most of the areas are relative small, the largest being

CHAPTER VI

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Park and recreation areas, schools, community centers, libraries and fire stations are types of Community Facilities provided to serve the people of the community. Increasing populations are followed by demands for improved and expanded facilities. More recreation areas of varied types must be established; additional school sites must be selected and acquired and more school plants erected. Other facilities of varying kinds must also be considered to satisfy the many requirements of the people.

The Land Use Plan depicts generally the facilities that should be provided and their approximate locations. This enables the authorities the opportunities to acquire adequate lands in advance of development and project the capital needs more prudently.

PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Park and recreation facilities occupy a definite place in the growth pattern of the city and its urban area. They contribute immeasurably to the building of a better citizenship among the youth of the community and also cultivate an improved civic consciousness among adults and visitors. In communities predominantly identified with tourism and recreation, the necessity of neighborhood facilities is sometimes overlooked, but this has not been altogether true in Fort Walton Beach.

EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS

Table 11, Park and Recreation areas existing in Fort Walton Beach, discloses that some 85 acres are currently allocated to park and recreation facilities, exclusive of beach areas. Most of the areas are relative small, the largest being

the Ferry Avenue Park of 20.6 acres and Jackson Park of 10.1 acres. Of the total acreage indicated in Table 11, 18.28 acres are devoted to Playground areas at schools. On the basis of a population of 10,500 as of 1959, there is about one acre of park and playground to every 122 of the population. Assuming that 25,000 can be accommodated within the present corporate area, 250 acres of public open space can be used ultimately to good advantage. This is predicated on a nationally recognized standard of 1 acre of park and recreation land per 100 population.

TABLE 11

EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS

<u>PARKS</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
Garniers Beach	1.50
Villa Russ	2.50
Ferry Avenue	20.60
Negro Recreation Area	9.20
Jet Stadium	8.00
Jackson	10.10
Westside	9.08
Bayou Woods	1.80
Vesta Heights	2.06
Markella	<u>2.50</u>
	67.34
<u>SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS</u>	
Oakland Heights	6.43
Westwood	7.35
Fort Walton	<u>4.50</u>
	18.28
TOTAL PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS	85.62 acres

PLAN FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

The plan of park and recreation areas should be based upon the diversified needs of the people, more particularly the needs of the various age groups and upon the geographical distribution of the population. Park areas should be supplemented

by landscaped parkways, plazas and places that contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the community. Today recreation for the youth must be balanced with recreation for the adult.

The park and recreation areas provided in a comprehensive plan should include the following:

1. NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS. Facilities planned primarily for children from about 5-14 years of age altho some facilities for pre-school children can be included.
2. COMMUNITY PLAYFIELDS. Larger than neighborhood facilities - serving several neighborhoods. Desirable to combine such facilities with those of Junior or Senior High Schools. According to accepted standards, there should be 1 acre of playfield per 800-1,000 population.
3. ATHLETIC FIELD - SPORTS CENTER. Each city should have one sports center to include stadia, sports arena and various courts and fields for major sports.
4. COMMUNITY CENTER. A building established for every 20,000 of population, located preferably in a recreation park. The structure should be a multiple purpose building to serve all age groups. Gymnasiums, meeting rooms, reading, music rooms and small auditorium are features of such building.
5. SPECIALIZED COMMUNITY PARKS. Zoological parks, botanical gardens, historical areas, amphitheatres and scenic landscaped parks.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY WIDE FACILITIES

One of the outstanding features of Fort Walton Beach is its location on Santa Rosa Sound, Choctawahatchee Bay, adjacent to the Gulf Coast. The beauty of the ocean and inland bays is an important part of the economy and of the daily life of the people. Special consideration should therefore be given to the development of

water front parks to serve the needs of people who visit as well as live, in the area. It is desirable that considerable portions of the Gulf Coast be reserved for public use. Unless such reservations are made now the beach will ultimately be absorbed by private interests. In addition to the beach areas, it would be most desirable to reserve selected areas on the Bay for recreation purposes - the establishment of boat ramps, berthing docks, swimming and fishing docks and picnic facilities.

In accordance with the foregoing general recommendations, the following specific suggestions are offered for the establishment of community-wide parks and recreation facilities.

1. ELLIOT'S POINT PARK. Title to part of this property may be owned by the city but notwithstanding, additional property now vacant should be acquired for the development of a community wide recreation area for boating, swimming and picnicing. The area should be at least nine to ten acres in extent.

2. FIVE MILE BAYOU PARK. A tract of 25-30 acres should be acquired on Five Mile Bayou westerly of Florida Avenue for development into a large scenic park devoted to picnicing, general recreational activities and water sports.

3. WRIGHT ROAD PARK. This park should be established on part of the city dump property adjacent to the proposed high school site, as indicated on the Land Use Plan (Figure 4). The park should encompass at least ten acres. It could serve as a neighborhood park for the West Side Neighborhood and also as a buffer to separate the industrial from the residential areas. It would also supplement the open space requirements of the proposed junior and senior high schools.

4. TEMPLE MOUND PARK. Within the center of the city, an area of about an acre including the Indian Mound should be acquired and preserved as a historical relic and matter of educational interest. Few areas have such mounds and needless to say this one should be preserved.

PARKS RECREATION AND SCHOOLS






COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLAN
FORT WALTON BEACH
FLORIDA

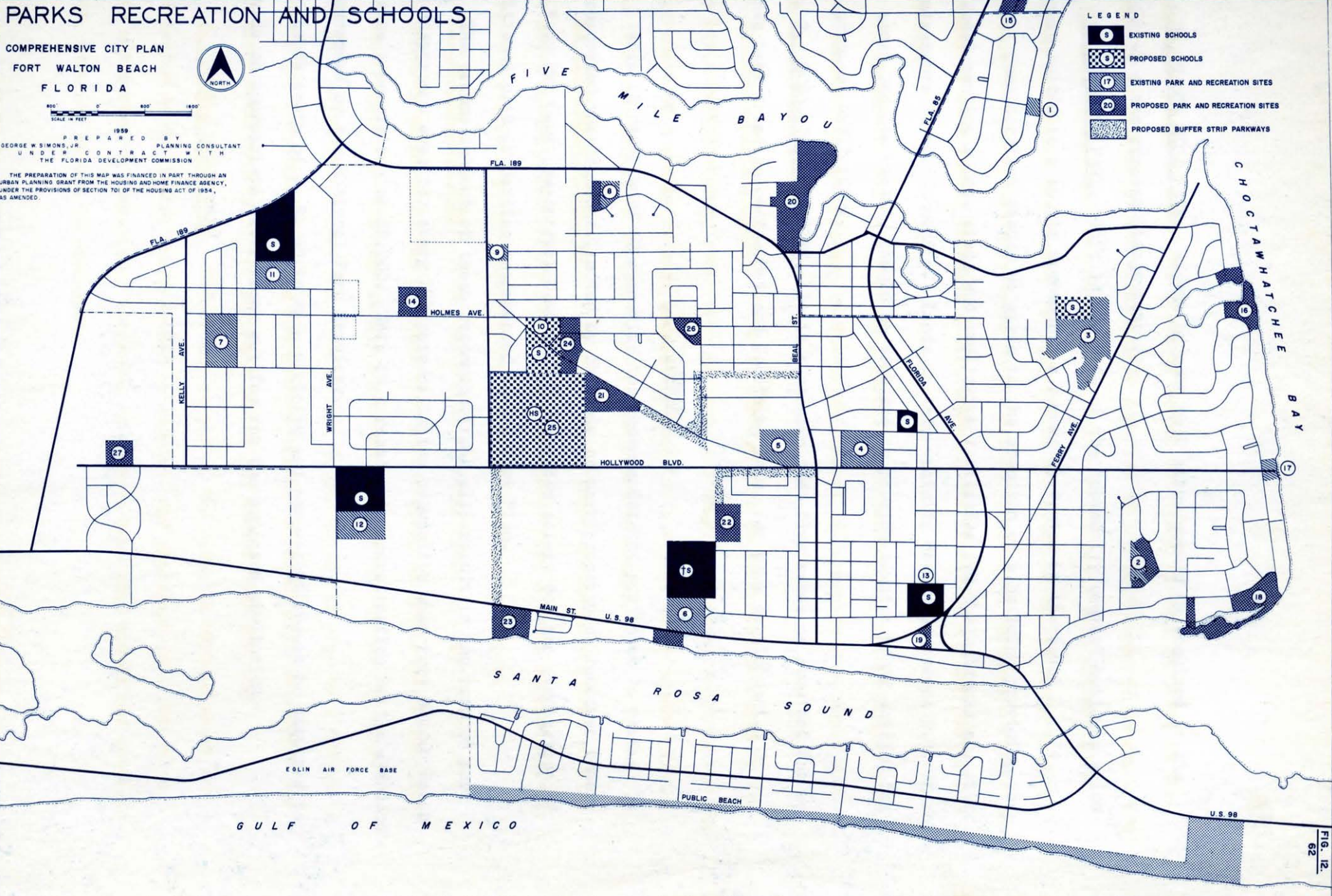


SCALE IN FEET
0 400 800 1600

1959
PREPARED BY
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- LEGEND
-  EXISTING SCHOOLS
 -  PROPOSED SCHOOLS
 -  EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION SITES
 -  PROPOSED PARK AND RECREATION SITES
 -  PROPOSED BUFFER STRIP PARKWAYS



5. SANTA ROSA PARK. A park of some 6-10 acres should be acquired in the vicinity of the proposed barge canal.

6. JACKSON PARK. This is the site of the "community center" building which is more suited to a sports arena than a community center in the usual sense. Consideration should be given to the erection of a building providing additional meeting rooms, stage and auditorium facilities for the cultural and civic requirements of the community. Lands in this vicinity developed across U.S. 98 to the south and now vacant, should be acquired to provide a water front setting for the proposed auditorium.

7. GOODTHING LAKE PARK. It is suggested that five acres be acquired for a scenic park fronting on the Bay and Goodthing Lake, for park development.

SUMMARY

Table 12 and Figure 12 summarize the recommendations pertinent to parks. It is suggested that funds collected by the sale of park property or received under the Four Per Cent Law on Park Donations be expended solely for the acquisition of additional park properties recommended in the Park Plan.

The accomplishment of these recommendations will result in one acre of park and playground area for every 123 persons in the population when Fort Walton Beach attains a population of 25,000. This is a reasonable approximation of the standard recommended by the National Park Service.

Lands south of U. S. 98 in this vicinity and now vacant should be acquired to provide an appropriate water front setting for the proposed auditorium.

TABLE 12

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

<u>ITEM*</u>	<u>PARK PROPERTY</u>	<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>ACRES OWNED</u>	<u>ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED</u>
<u>EXISTING PARK PROPERTIES</u>				
1.	Garniers Beach	Neighborhood	1.50	
2.	Villa Russ	Neighborhood	2.50	3.00
3.	Ferry Avenue	Neighborhood	20.60	
4.	Negro Recreation Area	Neighborhood	9.20	1.90
5.	Jet Stadium	Community	8.00	
6.	Jackson	Community	10.10	
7.	Westside	Neighborhood	9.08	
8.	Bayou Woods	Neighborhood	1.80	1.50
9.	Vesta Heights (1)	Neighborhood	2.06	
10.	Markella (2)	Neighborhood	<u>2.50</u>	<u> </u>
			67.34	6.40
<u>SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS</u> (Figured at one-third to one-half the total school property)				
11.	Oakland Heights	Neighborhood	6.43	
12.	Westwood	Neighborhood	7.35	
13.	Fort Walton	Neighborhood	<u>4.50</u>	
			18.28	
<u>ADDITIONAL PARKS RECOMMENDED</u>				
14.	Holmes Avenue Playground	Neighborhood		5.00
15.	South Avenue Playground	Neighborhood		3.25
16.	Goodthing Lake Park	Community		5.00
17.	Hollywood Beach Park	Neighborhood	.25	1.30
18.	Elliott's Point Park	Community		9.00
19.	Temple Mound Park	Community		1.50
20.	Five Mile Bayou Park	Community		28.00
21.	Wright Road Park	Community		10.30
22.	Fifth Avenue Park	Neighborhood		4.50
23.	Santa Rosa Park	Community	<u> </u>	<u>6.00</u>
			.25	73.85
<u>ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS RECOMMENDED</u>				
24.	West Side Elementary	Neighborhood		7.00
25.	Fort Walton Beach High School	Community		<u>25.00</u>
				32.00

<u>ITEM*</u>	<u>PARK PROPERTY</u>	<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>ACRES OWNED</u>	<u>ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED</u>
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PROPERTIES RECOMMENDED FOR ELIMINATION

9.	Vesta Heights Park (1) Numerous small lots of less than one acre	Neighborhood	2.06	
10.	Markella Park, to be combined with Westside Elementary School (2)		<u>2.50</u>	
			4.56	

*Numbers refer to identification numbers on the Park, Playground and School Plan Map (Figure 12).

- (1) This property is too small; however, the Bayou Woods property is recommended for expansion to take care of the need in this part of the neighborhood.
- (2) This park is recommended for expansion into an elementary school site, which will then provide about 7 acres of playground.

CHAPTER VII

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND PARKING

In most cities there is a central area that contains the dominant commercial nucleus of the whole urban area. It contains the greatest concentration of retail and governmental activities and, often are found in it, churches and other cultural institutions, a considerable amount of wholesale trade establishments and some light industries. The retail core of this central area is known as the Central Business District but more commonly as just "Downtown". The horse and buggy transportation used prior to the advent of the automobile encouraged the concentration of commercial and professional activities into the central core where much of the population found employment and a much greater number satisfied their material and cultural needs.

The introduction of the private automobile upset the dynamics of centralized development. No longer is it essential that the many commercial, cultural, governmental and employment activities be concentrated into the compact center. The increased mobility of people has made possible decentralized shopping locations for businesses servicing the various neighborhoods of a city. Unfortunately, decentralization thru the years has resulted in many low grade strip business districts lining the important highways and boulevards of cities. The shopping center is a more recent innovation that compromises effectively the advantages of decentralized and spacious locations with the convenience of many business establishments concentrated into one grouping.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN FORT WALTON BEACH

Because Fort Walton Beach came into being and developed during the automobile age, it is not surprising that its commercial areas are characterized as strip commercial districts. There is only a weak tendency for concentrated development near the confluence of Main Street and Florida Avenue, where two strip business districts converge.

MAIN STREET DEVELOPMENT

Along Main Street, on the main tourist travel route, is located the oldest commercial district of Fort Walton Beach. Main Street contains the most intensive commercial development; stores were constructed to the street line, side by side, with little thought given to parking of vehicles. Main Street, the only pedestrian shopping district found in Fort Walton Beach is limited to a few blocks lying between its east and west intersections with Brooks Street. West of this concentrated pedestrian shopping area is a strip containing a considerable number of varied establishments that service the highway trade, such as motels and restaurants.

FLORIDA AVENUE DEVELOPMENT

Florida Avenue, which is the newest, most modern and heavily traveled highway in Fort Walton Beach, provides the most recent and extensive strip of commercial development. It is stripped with business thruout the corporate area but because the development is so recent, it is designed better for the requirements of an automobile age. Many of the stores are of modern design, set back from the street line and separated from each other and surrounded by ample parking areas.

The total effect is one of less congestion of automobiles and ample parking close to each business establishment. The main disadvantage, as found in all strip business districts, is the inconvenience to the shopper who would make several stops. Usually it is necessary for the shopper to make individual stops by automobile at each destination in the district.

OTHER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Beal Street has no business development over a considerable portion of its length but spotty development does occur principally between Hollywood Boulevard and Holmes Avenue. The Land Use Plan proposes that business development along Beal Street be restricted to this sector and not be permitted to strip the entire length of this traffic artery. There may be some justification for a limited amount of neighborhood commercial development which should be restricted to that area between Hollywood Boulevard and Jackson Street.

One additional commercial area, partially located within the corporate area, occurs along State Road 189 in the vicinity of Wright Avenue. This development is of the nature of a neighborhood shopping character and is well located for expansion of this type of business.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL AREAS

The problem of the development of commercial areas in Fort Walton Beach is three-fold: (1) guiding future decentralized neighborhood shopping development into orderly nucleated centers rather than into strip business districts along the highways; (2) planning necessary highway business in such a way as to provide a minimum conflict with traffic movements and the aesthetics of the community and, (3) the development of a strong, well planned Central Business District as the focal point of the community.

NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING CENTERS

Undoubtedly, the trend toward decentralized neighborhood shopping facilities will continue in the Fort Walton Beach area. There will continue to be a strong tendency for the "convenience" goods and services establishments to locate close to neighborhood service areas. Grocery stores and meat markets; hardware stores; automotive sales and servicing; cleaning, laundry, tailoring and dressmaking establishments; motels; confectionery stores and many business and professional offices tend to gravitate to locations along major streets that are accessible by automobile. It is essential that plenty of free parking be provided and the Zoning Ordinance proposes minimum requirements for off-street parking for all future commercial development.

Of primary importance to the community however is the need to control the amount of strip commercial development to be permitted along the major streets. The development of neighborhood shopping centers probably will come as a matter of course but every effort should be made to encourage the concentration of neighborhood business into convenience centers with central parking lots. Neighborhood shopping centers are proposed on the Land Use Plan at various points in the urban area strategically located to serve surrounding neighborhoods.

In future years much development will take place in the western part of the city where there will be a demand for additional neighborhood business. The Land Use Plan suggests that this neighborhood business be concentrated into two nucleated centers, one of which is already established and the other which is proposed in the vicinity of Route 189 and Hollywood Boulevard.

HIGHWAY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

A limited amount of highway business activity can be justified in Fort Walton Beach to serve the tourist and other highway trade along Route 98. Hotels, restaurants, entertainment and other service establishments will form strip commercial districts in the urban sector of heavily traveled highways. A heavy concentration of this type of business however can prove very detrimental to the efficiency of a traffic artery, especially when structures are constructed on or close to the street line, with unlimited access and inadequate parking.

It is proposed that a considerable portion of Route 98 be developed for highway business. The Land Use Plan establishes reasonable area requirements for future development but attempts to prevent too much area being established to the detriment of bordering residential properties. Highway business in particular should be developed cautiously and in accordance with aesthetic considerations, because the highway entrances of a city will impress most travelers with the qualities of Fort Walton Beach. It should consist of businesses carefully selected for service to the highway traveler and unnecessary heavy commercial and industrial uses should be excluded. Billboards should be excluded but signs of reasonable size and proportions can be permitted only when located on the property of the business advertised. To accomplish these objectives a limited commercial district was proposed in the zoning ordinance.

Business structures should be set back from the highway right-of-way with ample off street parking provided and access to the property should be via a parallel, service street with controlled points of access a block or so apart. Techniques to this end were proposed in Figure 8 of the chapter on the Major Street Plan.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Because Fort Walton Beach has no well defined, strongly developed Central Business District as found in most cities, thoughtful consideration should be given to the creation of such a district.

A well planned Central Business District has many advantages. As the most concentrated and diversified shopping center it will have drawing power for trade throughout the urban and tributary trade area. Its contribution to the tax base of the City will be greater than that of any other commercial area and as the center of governmental functions, the Central Area is the focal point of the community. How much area will be required for a Central Business District? Where should it be located? What factors will influence healthy growth of a well planned retail shopping district? What non-retail functions should be accommodated in a Central Business District? These are questions to be considered.

SIZE OF AREA

Studies made throughout the United States in numerous cities have shown a need for 20 to 40 square feet of retail floor area for each person of the corporate area of which about half should be located within the Central Business District. Another estimate of requirements is based upon square feet of retail floor area per person in the trade area. Based upon an estimated population of 41,000 persons in the southern part of Okaloosa County in 1958, about 328,000 square feet of retail floor area would be justified now. But by 1965, when the population of the trade area approaches 65,000 these requirements should approximate 500,000 square feet of retail floor area, which is here suggested as a practical objective for an immediate goal. Allowing for parking at a ratio of 200 square feet of

parking space per 100 square feet of retail floor area, 30 percent of the total area for streets and small allowances for non-productive area, a need for about 60 acres of land is indicated for 1965 requirements. An additional 15 acres for office space and uses brings the total estimate to 75 acres.

LOCATION

The Planning Board has considered the location of a Central Business District in the area bordered by Hollywood Boulevard, Beal Street, Florida Avenue and Main Street. After some study of this area the Consultants advise against it as too big an undertaking contrary to the trend, business movements and reasonable area requirements. It is an area developed largely for residential purposes; some is blighted but a large amount is standard. It is an area that could be readily rehabilitated into a good liveable neighborhood. The street pattern and right-of-way widths of the area are not conducive to business development. Any successful redevelopment would necessarily assume the magnitude of an "urban renewal" project requiring the condemnation of all properties, demolition of all structures, redesign of streets and utility systems and then resale of vacant land to individuals for business development. Florida communities do not yet have this authority nor is slum clearance justified in this case. Any attempt at redevelopment short of these proportions, such as rezoning from residential to commercial uses, will fail. Rezoning might induce a few businesses of low grade such as warehouses and light industry to infiltrate that area, but high grade commercial development such as retail stores, will not gravitate to a

blighted area. The area in question includes some 160 acres which is enough property to accommodate well over 200,000 population in the urban area. By way of comparison, the Central Business District of Orlando, which accommodates an urban area population of 175,000 and a trade area population of 400,000, comprises less than 100 acres of developed area.

A CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

The Main Street Business District approaches more closely than any other business district, the character of "downtown". At the confluence of Main Street and Florida Avenue (State Road 85), there is a trend toward an additional concentrated development with a pedestrian shopping district. Two new banks have recently been located on First Street, north of and parallel to Main Street. The new Trailways Bus Terminal has also been located on Second Street at Chestnut and there are indications that business enterprise will gradually fill in the other portions of this area.



Figure 13 presents a plan for the development of a strong Central Business District. The area is suggested firstly because it offers a logical extension of existing development and secondly, it is consistent with reasonable area requirements. The total area comprising some 100 acres required for ultimate development is included within the section extending from Brooks Street to Hollywood Boulevard and from Jackson Boulevard to Chicago Avenue. That portion of the area located south of Second Street including some 70 acres, is more practical for development of a pedestrian retail shopping district and therefore is suggested as

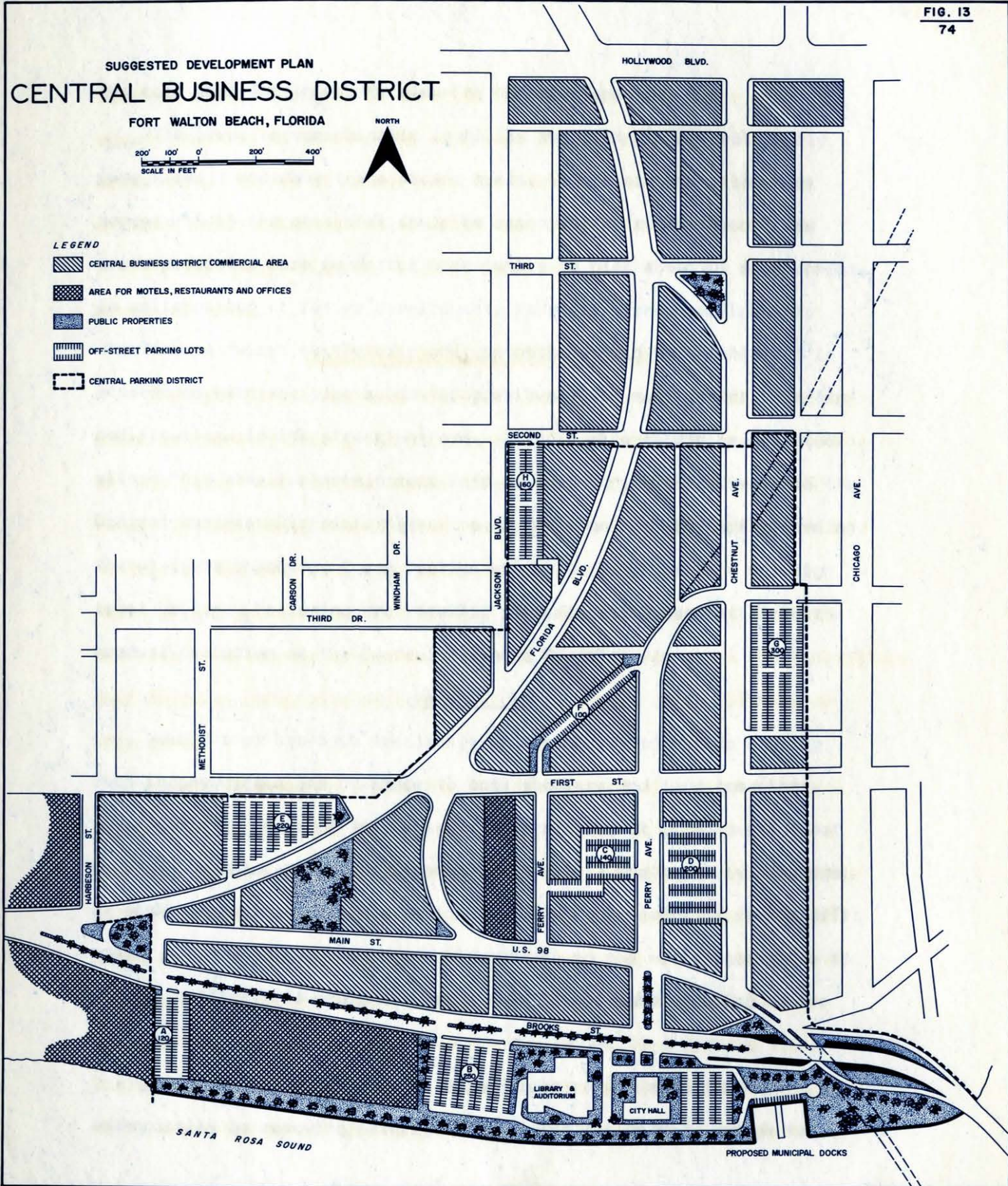
SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA



LEGEND

-  CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT COMMERCIAL AREA
-  AREA FOR MOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND OFFICES
-  PUBLIC PROPERTIES
-  OFF-STREET PARKING LOTS
-  CENTRAL PARKING DISTRICT



the core area for immediate planning and development.

The area, topographically level, is supplied with exceptionally wide streets and many large vacant areas. There are a few low cost houses within the area that could be economically redeveloped. Few areas present a more wonderful opportunity to plan ahead of development. In anticipation of future development, many off street parking lots should be acquired by the city and, setbacks should be established in accordance with the plan suggested previously for making some moderate modifications in the street pattern. Also, a site should be selected within this area for development into a Civic Center that ties into the Central Business District. Then too, a decision must be made regarding the ultimate improvement and realignment of U. S. 98, with a new high level bridge. Following are specific recommendations essential to the gradual evolution of the Central Business District Plan.

TRAFFIC FLOW

Main Street has been needlessly congested for some time causing much inconvenience and nuisance to both shoppers and thru travelers. As an ultimate means of overcoming this stricture it is suggested that U. S. 98 be relocated along Brooks Street with a new high level bridge as shown in Figure 13. This would expedite the movement of thru traffic and at the same time, keep Fort Walton Beach to the west, accessible to tourist traffic. It would also make Main Street more pleasing to the shopper.

Immediate relief however on Main Street can be accomplished economically by removing parking and widening the roadway enough to

provide four moving lanes of traffic. The plan of widening however should not include any curbside parking because this would encroach too much upon sidewalk space. Curbside parking within this heavily traveled section impedes the flow of traffic.

Ferry Avenue currently intersects diagonally the regular gridiron street pattern. Altho the problem is not serious at this time, ultimately as the area develops, it will present many problems of traffic control. It is therefore suggested that steps be initiated now to alter this pattern as suggested in Figure 14. That portion, Ferry Avenue between First Streets and Perry Avenue should be converted into an off street parking facility and also as a delivery accessway to the rear of businesses on Florida Avenue. Other portions of Terry Avenue, as shown on Figure 13, should be closed and abandoned as a public way. Setbacks should be established to eliminate the bottleneck of Perry Avenue at its intersection with Main Street. Property on the east side of Perry Avenue between Main Street and Brooks Street should be acquired to eliminate the jog in Perry Avenue and also to provide considerable parking. Ultimately, First Street and Chestnut Avenue should rival Main Street in importance for business. Chestnut Street is a wide, through street but First Street should be widened as indicated on the Plan.

PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

When the Central Business District has attained 500,000 square feet of retail floor area, there will be a demand for about 3500 parking spaces, based upon a ratio of 7 spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail floor area, a ratio maintained by many shopping centers.

The area which is here proposed as the Central Business District now has some 1325 parking spaces divided between 485 curb and 840 private off-street spaces. Taking the area as a whole, there is no current shortage of parking spaces, but unfortunately the available spaces are not distributed where the demand is greatest. The Main Street businesses do not have sufficient parking; at this time about 150 additional, well-located spaces are necessary. The business district located south of First Street has some 791 parking spaces, excluding spaces provided at motels, 387 spaces of which are located at the curb. The remaining 494 spaces are privately owned, off-street spaces, most of which are available free to the public but many of which are used primarily for employee parking.

Besides satisfying the current shortages, future requirements resulting from business expansion and street modernization, must be anticipated. It is recommended that 128 existing curb spaces along Main Street be replaced by off-street facilities. Altogether, an off-street parking program to provide about 500 off-street spaces near Main Street businesses is recommended as an immediate goal. Lots A, B and C are suggested for immediate acquisition; lots D, E, G and H are proposed to satisfy the long range requirements and augment

immediate needs. Lot F would be realized by converting a portion existing of Ferry Avenue into an off-street parking facility.

It is not anticipated that the pedestrian shopping district will extend north of Second Street therefore no community parking lots are proposed to serve that area. Shoppers generally will make individual stops north of Second Street and each business in that area should provide its own parking lot in close proximity to the business structure.

If all the public lots suggested within the Central Business District Plan are acquired, an aggregate of some 1500 off-street spaces will be provided in the form of City-owned facilities. The remaining 2000 spaces that will be required ultimately should be provided in privately owned facilities. All parking lots should be located within 500 feet or less of businesses served; they should be hard surfaced, engineered for good drainage, lighted for night use, and metered for control of turnover. Facilities in prime demand should be limited to a maximum of three hours, but lots less conveniently located can be metered for longer periods. Although parking meter revenues often make parking improvements self sustaining their primary purpose is to encourage a rapid and frequent turnover of space users. All meter receipts, both from the curb and off-street facilities, should be separated from other revenues and used solely for parking improvements.

It is suggested that the properties included within the Central Parking District, as delineated in figure 13, be exempt from the off-street parking provisions of the Zoning ordinance, at such time as this parking plan is put into effect.

CHAPTER VIII

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

A city requires different types of public service buildings to provide a well rounded urban life for its people. Fire stations, police stations, hospitals, utility buildings and a City Hall are essential for the services of protection and administration. In addition, every city needs a minimum amount of cultural facilities such as meeting halls, recreation center buildings and libraries.

It is not surprising that a city growing as fast as Fort Walton Beach is handicapped by inadequate facilities for these various community functions. A new City Hall is needed very badly. Facilities for the police and fire departments must be provided. Existing library facilities are inadequate and a library should be planned of adequate size with a central location. Fort Walton Beach needs a public meeting hall or small auditorium for civic purposes and also for attracting small conventions to the Playground Area. Because of the many motels and beach attractions, Fort Walton Beach should be able to attract many small conventions provided a good meeting hall were available. In as much as conventions alone would not justify the expense this type of facility must be designed primarily for regular civic and cultural needs of the population. Possibly it could be combined as a Community Center-Auditorium building.

It is important that these public facilities be planned with the future population in mind in order that no new structure will be obsolete within a few years of completion long before it is paid for.

A CIVIC CENTER PLAN

If possible, it would be desirable for the city to plan the new City Hall, Library and Community Center-Meeting Hall within a civic center grouping of buildings near the Central Business District in one of two possible locations.

One obvious location is along First Street in the vicinity of the present City Hall location but preferably closer to Florida Avenue. The block bounded by First Street, Florida Avenue and Harbeson Street would provide an interesting focal point for a City Hall. Eventually, the Fort Walton Beach Elementary School site should be available for long range expansion of the Civic Center as additional buildings may be required.

A bold and more appealing proposal should be considered for a bayfront Civic Center location, such as shown in Figure 13. This proposal depends, of course, upon acceptance of the proposal to revitalize Brooks Street. The bayfront civic center proposal would include a bayfront park, recreation area and city docks. This particular site for the City Hall was selected because of its prominent position at the foot of Perry Boulevard.

The civic center should be designed of spacious proportions with attractive landscaping and the architecture of the various buildings should be related. As good a view as possible of the buildings should be offered from several directions, intending that the result will be one of beauty and the source of much civic pride.

HOSPITAL FACILITIES

Fort Walton Beach recently developed a modern hospital on a spacious site that will provide for future expansion.

FIRE STATIONS

The national Board of Fire Underwriters suggests that no part of a built up residential area be farther removed than one and one-half to two miles from an engine company. A new central fire station is needed and the site suggested is west of **Florida Avenue** on Hollywood Boulevard. This location will be central to all of the built up portion of the city and particularly accessible to the business areas. In the future another station will be necessary to serve the far west portion of the corporate area. Assuming that the city will eventually expand west and perhaps north of Route 189, a branch fire station site near the intersection of Route 189 and Wright Avenue is suggested.

LIBRARY

Standards of the American Library Association suggest one-half square foot of floor area of library space per person of the population in the service area. At this time Fort Walton Beach could justify a minimum of 6,000 square feet based upon the current population of the corporate area but room for expansion to meet the requirements of 1965, suggest around 10,000 square feet and additional expansion must be allowed in plans for the more distant future. The library should be planned with an audio-visual aid room, which also might serve as a small meeting room. A new innovation that applies to libraries as well as banks is the drive-in service window. Specialized services should be obtained in the design of a modern library. Strictly as a temporary measure, when the new City Hall is completed the old City Hall building might be converted into a library. Its location here would be greatly improved over the present location, altho the building itself is not very adaptable as a library.

CHAPTER IX

PUBLIC UTILITY SYSTEMS

Every enterprising, growing community must contemplate the expenditure of considerable sums of money for the construction of public utilities, particularly water supply, sewerage and sewage disposal systems. There must be an adequate supply of water for domestic, public and industrial uses and a comprehensive system of sewerage and sewage disposal to collect, treat and dispose of the liquid wastes or spent water. Because of the technical problems identified with such projects and the economies incident thereto, their detailed planning and design lies principally within the field of the engineer. The various studies, ideas and projections of the planner should be however most enlightening and helpful to the engineer in his evaluation of the diverse problems.

WATER SUPPLY

Of major importance to the city that courts industrial growth as well as residential and commercial expansion, is an adequate source of water of good quality. This, Fort Walton Beach finds in the underground aquifers. Throughout this western section of Florida, deep wells produce ample quantities of water of a quality less in hardness than found in the peninsular areas. The quality of these waters has attracted many industries into the Pensacola region.

Currently, Fort Walton Beach has four deep wells, 735 feet in depth, producing an average daily consumption (1959) of 1,233,000 gallons and a maximum daily consumption of 2,000,000. The present capacity of the water plant is 2,628,000 gallons per day. The water is distributed

thru some twelve miles of mains and distributors, covering the area shown in Figure 14. There are located in the system three elevated storage reservoirs having an aggregate storage capacity of 400,000, also one ground storage reservoir of 500,000 gallon capacity. This gives the city a storage capacity equivalent to about an average days consumption.

In 1950 there were 750 metered services. Since then to and including 1950, the number of metered services has increased to 3795. And since 1956, the average daily consumption has increased from 821,000 gallons to 1,233,000 gallons for 1959. The average daily consumption of water approximates 85 gallons and the maximum, about 130 gallons in 1959.





Based upon the 1956 Special census of 9,456 persons, there were about 3.6 persons per meter. On this basis there should be at least 6,000 metered customers in 1965 serving some 21,000 persons with an average daily consumption approximately 2,100,000 gallons or an increase of 867,000 gallons over the present. Obviously these data reflect the rate at which the city must satisfy the requirements of the future. When the vacant lands to the west and north begin to develop and fill up, the city should explore the possibilities of reorganizing its pumping plant, possibly breaking it down into diversely distributed units.

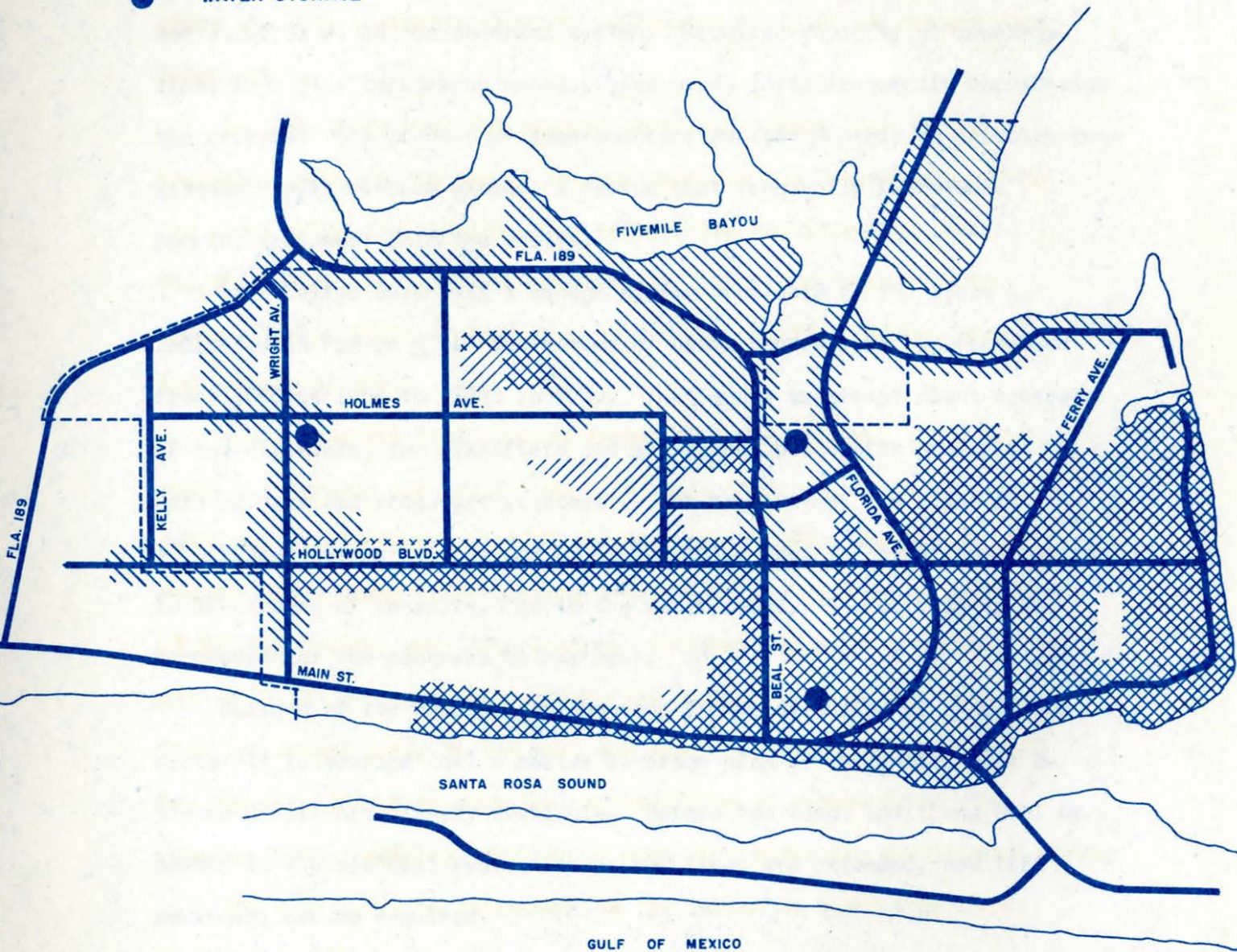
The city is to be commended for the manner in which they have keep apace with development.

CITY OF FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA
AREAS SERVED BY WATER AND SEWERS

FIG. 14
84

LEGEND

-  AREAS SERVED BY WATER
-  AREAS SERVED BY SEWERS
-  AREAS SERVED BY WATER AND SEWERS
-  WATER STORAGE



SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The expansion of a water supply system depends primarily on the addition of wells to assure quantity from the source, additional pumps to make supply available at suitable pressures and more lines of pipe to serve the customers. Grade in a water distribution system is not as vital as in the sewerage system. Required capacity of sewerage lines in a flat topography necessitates grade which frequently complicates the problem. The economy of sewerage construction depends on capacity consistent with minimum grades, a factor that frequently introduces pumping equipment into the system.

Fort Walton Beach has a sewage system available to the areas indicated in Figure 13. The number of sewer connections has increased from 1,000 in 1956 to 2,833 in 1959. The sewage treatment plant consists of two digestors, two clarifiers and six sludge beds which provides both primary and secondary treatment. The capacity of the plant is $1\frac{1}{2}$ million gallons per day and it is estimated that the plant now operates to 70 percent of capacity. As in the water supply, the city is to be commended for the progress it has made.

Because of the problems encountered in the extension of a sewerage system it is advised that a master sewerage plan of the entire area be prepared - if not already available. Before too long, additions will be needed in the disposal system and as new lines are extended, new lift equipment may be required.

CHAPTER X

ANNEXATION

A city grows in two ways - in number of people and in land area. Most cities start with a small land area and a few people, as did Camp Walton years ago. As the initial area filled up and developments spilled over into contiguous lands, corporate limits were extended and the town's jurisdiction broadened. By such successive corporate expansions, the present corporate area was attained with a large percentage of its land vacant or sparsely developed.

As the central town or city increased its population; as its economic opportunities were enhanced and its lands were improved; active development progressed in areas contiguous to the city limits. To all intents and purposes, these contiguous developments were a part of the city's expanding physical pattern and life; and, possibly for the welfare of the area as a whole, they should be annexed to the city. This is especially true as the development of lands within the corporate area approach saturation.

Annexation is not a single process. Authorization to annex land and the plan or plans to accomplish it must originate with the legislature. By the adoption of an act, the legislature can provide for territorial annexation in one of several ways, of which some are:

1. Enlarge the corporate area directly without referendum.

This method was used by the City of Tampa in 1953.

2. Enlarge the city, subject to a referendum of the qualified electors. This method, in one form or another is the most common.

3. Enlarge the city by segments of land on petition of the property owners affected, to the city authorities. This method is used extensively in Orlando.

Such legislative acts can be adopted only during sessions of the Florida Legislature and then preferably at a regular session; the next of which will be held in 1961.

In contemplating the possibilities of annexation, the following factors should be explored. What functions and services must the city provide and what additional costs, operating and capital, will annexation incur? What conditions prevail in the area to be annexed? Is it largely vacant or developed land and if developed, what are the conditions of streets and other facilities? What tax revenues can be anticipated from the unincorporated areas and to what extent is homestead exemption a factor? Casually, annexation may appear the logical course but deeper exploration may reveal that revenues from the area will not balance anticipated expenditures. In some instances however, it may be advantageous to pay additional costs at first, especially if substantial taxable property is acquired.

Annexation has its favorable points which to many people far outweigh the unfavorable. By annexation the area is expanded, the population increased but of greatest importance, the area and its people become the integral part of the dynamics of the community, socially, economically and politically.

The Land Use Plan presented earlier (Figure 4) anticipates a city of Fort Walton Beach extending considerably beyond the present limits.

Obviously, to assume the responsibility now for such an extended area would be unwise but in 25-30 years this entire area doubtlessly will have been incorporated. Consequently, in anticipation of this later date, plans should be shaped now.

Planning, to be comprehensive as it relates to land uses, thoroughfares and utility systems, must include all the surrounding urban area that can be reasonably assimilated. Many of the elements of this plan have been prepared on an urban area basis. This was done primarily to coordinate the various parts of the urban area and simplify the requirements of annexation. By such planning, the various contiguous areas can subsequently be studied as possibilities for annexation.

Currently there is ample undeveloped land within the corporate area to accommodate at least twice the present population. But, the population projections indicate that the present area will be used up by 1965. Because of this, annexation should be explored now if the optimum advantages of planning are to be realized.

As an immediate objective, the City should annex all that area west to State Road 189 (Mary Esther Cutoff) and north to Five Mile Bayou, exclusive of Cinco Bayou. Eventually, as these sparsely developed areas build up, it may be desirable to annex a substantial area north of Five Mile Bayou and west of the Mary Esther Cutoff but the extent of these annexations will depend on how economically they can be serviced and administered. It is also urgently recommended that the bordering portion of Santa Rosa Island be annexed to the city as soon as circumstances permit. This area is a great potential asset to the City.

Although the city must assume the responsibility of extending utilities, fire and police protection, and other services into areas annexed, such facilities cannot be provided instantly as many desire. A plan of procedure must be prepared commensurate with the city's ability to pay. Almost immediately after annexation, fire and police protection can be provided as well as garbage collection service. Street lights can be installed gradually but such major utilities as water, sewerage and streets must be programmed over a period of time. Ultimately before most of the residents realize it, they will be a living, functioning part of the larger political unit - the city.

CHAPTER XI

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS BUDGET

The rapid growth of Florida communities has multiplied and magnified community problems, and improvements lag far behind the actual needs. All too often projects under construction should have been completed last year. Uncoordinated piecemeal attempts to catch up without the benefit of intelligent planning can cause serious financial difficulties in the future.

A Capital Improvement budget will give a city a clear picture of its future capital requirements, the estimated cost and the method of financing. Capital improvement programming has its roots in the general overall planning for the growth and development of the community and its fiscal administration. The program is a moving timetable of projects and facilities needed to be carried out during a specified period, in the case of Fort Walton Beach, a six year period ahead.

The projects and facilities included in the Capital Improvement Budget

are based on community need as reflected by the comprehensive planning studies. Some projects are more essential and urgent than others; some can be effectuated under provisions of the annual budget while others will require the issuance of bonds, either general advalorem or revenue bonds.

Each year the Capital Improvement Budget should be reviewed, revised and projected another year ahead to keep abreast of changing conditions. It is a continuing process based on the city's ability to pay. Because the city never remains static the capital improvement budget must be flexible to meet changing conditions.

Such major projects as sewerage, sewage disposal, water distribution and pumping are planned in detail by engineers specialized in those fields. Such projects are financed largely by either general or revenue bonds payable over a period of years. Where revenue bonds are used the customers pay a monthly charge to defray the debt service, operations and administrative costs. Streets, on the other hand, and drainage facilities do not produce revenues so must be paid by general bonds for which an advalorem tax must be levied in the budget each year. Community centers, recreation facilities, fire stations and libraries must also be financed thru the issuance of general advalorem tax bonds. City Halls and possibly fire and police stations may be financed by revenue bonds payable out of rents paid for occupancy.

A capital improvement may be defined as a major improvement or betterment of a receiving nature to the physical plant of the municipality as differentiated from ordinary repairs or maintenance of a receiving nature.

It includes expenditures for construction, reconstruction, replacement, major repair, addition or other improvements to public buildings, highways, bridges, parks, playground, utilities or other public works or any facility or structure appurtenant to any of these, or any expenditure for the purchase of land, building, structure or major equipment.

The following list attempts to evaluate projects in accord to their priority of necessity and the maximum benefit they contribute to the general welfare. Some projects are listed for later scheduling but this list is not complete, being more flexible than the list included in the six year program.

- 1. Reconstruction of Deal St. between Hollywood Blvd. & Fifth Ave. on 100 ft. right-of-way with 66 ft. of paving, 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, median strip. (2400 feet) S/C B 1 100,000
- 2. Reconstruction of Deal St. between Hollywood Blvd. & Fifth Ave. on 100 ft. right-of-way with 66 ft. of paving, 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, median strip. (2400 feet) S/C B 2 100,000
- 3. Reconstruction of section of State 98 between Fifth St. and City Center Detour (State 104) on a right-of-way of 120 feet providing six moving lanes on the divided highway plus two required access streets. (2.7 miles) (Exclusive of right-of-way) S/C B 3 100,000
- 4. Acquire 105 feet right-of-way along Brooks St. for long-range realignment of Highway 98 connection with high level bridge. (2200 feet) S/C B 4 200,000
- 5. Acquire 105 feet right-of-way along Brooks St. for long-range realignment of Highway 98 connection with high level bridge. (2200 feet) S/C B 5 200,000
- 6. Construction of new high-level bridge, and development of Van Dyke Street right-of-way. S/C B 6 -

FT. WALTON BEACH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

I. ARTERIAL STREETS

Item	Description of Project	Method of Financing	Prior-ity	Year	Cost
1.	Widening and Reconstruction of U. S. Highway 98 thru the City.	S/C	A	1	\$22,000
a.	Widen section of Main Street Business District to 4 moving lanes without parking but with left-turn lanes. 52 ft. of paving; 2600 feet in this section.				
b.	Acquisition of 31 ft. of additional right-of-way on Main St. between Brooks St. and Bass St. (3 ft. from north side, 28 ft. from south side). (1500 feet section)	S/C	A	1	200,000
c.	Reconstruct section of Main St. between Brooks St. & Sixth St. with 66 ft. of paving including 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, 1 median-left turn strip. 3200 feet.	S/C	A	1	105,000
d.	Acquire 106 feet right-of-way along Brooks St. for long-range redevelopment of Highway 98 connection with high level bridge. (2500 feet)	S/C	B	2	350,000
e.	Reconstruct section of Route 98 between Sixth St. and Mary Esther Cutoff (State 189) on a right-of-way of 150 feet providing six moving lanes on the divided highway plus two marginal access streets. (2.2 miles) (Exclusive of right-of-way)	S/C	B	5	638,000
f.	Construction of new high-level bridge, and development of the Brooks Street right-of-way.	S/C	B	6	--
2.	Reconstruction of Beal St. between Hollywood Blvd. & Fifth Ave. on 100 ft. right-of-way with 66 ft. of paving, 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, left-turn, median strip. (3600 feet)	S/C	B	6	108,000

FT. WALTON BEACH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

I. ARTERIAL STREETS

Item	Description of Project	Method of Financing	Prior-ity	Year	Cost
3.	Widen State Road 189 to provide 4 moving lanes, no parking. (Temporary widening, ultimately to be reconstructed with 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, median-left turn strip, curbs and gutter) 3.3 miles to be improved through the corporate area.	S/C	C	6	164,000
4.	Improvement of Beal Street between U.S. 98 and Hollywood Blvd. to 66 feet of paving, 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, left-turn median strip. (3000 feet)	S/C	C	Later	--
5.	Acquire 100 ft. right-of-way on Hollywood Blvd. between State Rd. 85 and Beal Street.	G.O *	B	2	24,000
6.	Pave Hollywood Blvd. between Beal St. and the City Limits				
a.	Provide 64 ft. paving, 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, left-turn median strip. Between Beal St. and point 3000 feet west of Beal St.	G.O.	A	1	63,000
b.	Pave Hollywood Blvd. from point 3000 feet west of Beal St. to City Limits. Provide 58 ft. pavement with 2 moving lanes, 2 parking or moving lanes, median-left turn strip. (5900 feet)	G.O.	A	1	102,000
c.	Pave Hollywood Blvd. from City Limits to State Rd. 189; provide 58 ft. of pavement with 2 moving lanes, 2 parking or moving lanes, median-left turn strip. (4000 feet).	County	A	2	76,000
7.	Pave Wright Ave. entire length to 58 ft. providing 2 moving lanes, 2 parking or moving lanes, median-left turn strip. (6500 ft.)	G.O.	B	2	123,500
8.	Pave un-named arterial street located one-half mile east of Wright Ave. from Highway 98 to State Rd. 189. (7400 feet) Provide 58 ft. of paving, 2 moving lanes, 2 parking or moving lanes, median-left turn strip.	G.O.	B	3	140,600

FT. WALTON BEACH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

I. ARTERIAL STREETS

Item	Description of Project	Method of Financing	Prior-ity	Year	Cost
9.	Right-of-way Acquisition: Walter Martin Ave.-Industrial Ave.-Robinwood Drive Extension to Highway 98. 100 ft. right-of-way.				
a.	Acquire tie in of Walter Martin Ave. on direct alignment with Industrial Ave.	G.O.	A	1	20,000
b.	Acquire tie in of Robinwood Dr. extension to Hollywood Blvd.	G.O.	A	1	10,000
c.	Acquire extension of Robinwood Dr. south of Hollywood Blvd. to U. S. Route 98.	G.O.	A	1	*
10.	Pave the Robinwood Dr.-Industrial Ave.-Walter Martin Ave. Arterial with 64 feet, providing 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, median-left-turn strip. (5000 feet)	G.O.	B	4	105,000
11.	Right-of-way acquisition to provide 80 ft. on First St. between State Rd. 85 and Chicago Ave. (1100 feet)	G.O.	B	3	100,000
12.	Acquire right-of-way on Perry Ave. at bottleneck with Main St. to make 100 ft. right-of-way throughout.	G.O.	C	5	50,000
13.	Widen First Street to 64 feet, with 4 moving lanes, 2 parking lanes, between State Rd. 85 and Chicago Ave.	G.O.	B	3	14,000
14.	Widen Perry Ave. from Main St. to Ferry Ave. to 82 feet, providing 4 moving lanes, 2 lanes of angle parking.	G.O.	B	5	18,000
15.	Widen Chestnut Ave. from First St. to Hollywood Blvd. to 82 feet, providing 4 moving lanes, 2 lanes of angle parking.	G.O.	C	6	43,200
16.	Acquire additional right-of-way on Pine St. between Second St. and Brooks Street for extension of arterial system.	G.O.	C	6	16,000

*Acquired when land is sub-divided, no cost.

FT. WALTON BEACH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

I. ARTERIAL STREETS (Continued)

Item	Description of Project	Method of Financing	Prior-ity	Year	Cost
17.	Improve Pine St. between Hollywood Blvd. and Brooks St. to 58 feet with 2 moving lanes, 2 parking or moving lanes, 1 left turn-median.	G. O.	C	6	53,000
18.	Improve Brooks St. between U.S. 98 (Main St.) and Pine Street to 58 feet with 4 moving lanes and a median-left turn lane.				
a.	Right-of-way. Widen to 70 feet.	G.O.	C	6	2,400
b.	Construction. (800 feet)	G.O.	C	6	15,200

EXPLANATIONS ON STREET PROJECTS IN COMPUTING COSTS:

Costs for right-of-way are considered average estimated costs at \$3.00 per front foot for a ten foot depth per side in taking residential property. Costs are estimated at \$45.00 per front foot for a ten foot depth side in taking commercial, but this estimate is more flexible depending upon commercial locations.

Paving costs estimated for all State and County projects are based upon an estimate of \$.39 per sq. ft. of paving plus \$1.75 per lineal foot of curb and gutter. Costs for City projects are based upon current estimated costs of \$7.50 per lineal foot of a twenty-two foot (width of paving) street. These estimates produce the following formulas, which were used in calculating costs of the preceding items;

	State Projects	City Projects	Cost per lineal ft.
22 ft. street, including curb and gutter	--	\$ 7.50	
34 ft. street, " " " "	--	11.00	
52 ft. street, " " " "	\$23.78	18.00	
58 ft. street, " " " "	--	19.00	
64 ft. street, " " " "	28.46	21.00	
64 ft. street, " " " " & median	32.00	--	
72 ft. street, " " " " " "	35.00		

FT. WALTON BEACH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

II. CENTRAL AREA PARKING IMPROVEMENTS

Item	Description of Project	Method of Financing	Pri- ority	Year	Cost
1.	Acquire off-street parking lots A, B and C as suggested on the Central Area Plan.	R.B.	A	1	\$300,000
2.	Improve the foregoing off-street facilities to provide some 500 parking spaces. (500 spaces @ \$150 per space for engineering and paving costs plus \$58 per meter)	R.B.	A	1	104,000
3.	Acquire additional off-street parking lots in accordance with suggestions of the Central Area Plan to provide some 500 additional spaces for future development.	G.O.	B	2	300,000
4.	Acquire additional off-street parking lots in accordance with suggestions of the Central Area Plan to provide some 400 additional spaces for future development.	G.O.	B	4	300,000
5.	Develop approximately 200 additional off-street parking spaces (@ \$208 per space, including meters and paving)	R.B.	B	3	41,600
6.	Develop approximately 200 additional off-street parking spaces.	R.B.	B	4	41,600
7.	Develop approximately 200 additional off-street parking spaces.	R.B.	B	5	41,600
8.	Develop approximately 200 additional off-street parking spaces.	R.B.	C	6	41,600
9.	Develop additional off-street parking spaces.	R.B.	C	Later	--
10.	Sidewalks (\$5,000 annually)	C.R.	B	1-6	30,000

FT. WALTON BEACH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

III. PUBLIC BUILDINGS & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Item	Description of Project	Method of Financing	Prior-ity	Year	Cost
1.	Acquisition of Property for Civic Center Development, site for City Hall, Library, Community Center-Auditorium.	G.O.	A	1	\$200,000
2.	Construction of new City Hall	G.O.	A	2	200,000
3.	Construction of Community Center-Auditorium.	G.O.	B	3	150,000
4.	Renovation of old City Hall as a temporary Library.	G.O.	B	3	22,000
5.	Construction of new Main Fire Station and purchase of site and equipment.	G.O.	B	4	90,000
6.	Construction of modern Library	G.O.	C	Later	--
7.	Construction of branch fire station in western part of city; site and equipment.	G.O.	C	Later	--
8.	Extensions to the water system.	R.B.	B	Continuous	*
9.	Extensions to the sewer system	R.B.	B	Continuous	*

* Extensions to the Sewer and Water System will require the expenditure of several hundred thousand dollars over a six-year period, but these extensions are financed out of tap and connection fees plus monthly service charges. Long-range financing will be accomplished by revenue certificates. No detailed costs are included in this Capital Improvement Program, because these items must be determined by detailed engineering surveys.

FT. WALTON BEACH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

IV. PARKS & RECREATION AREAS

Item	Description of Project	Method of Financing	Prior-ity	Year	Cost
1.	Acquisition of Additional Park properties totalling about 50 acres (which will not be acquired by donation under the 4% Park Dedication Law)				
a.	First acquisition, about 25 acres (@ \$1500 per acre)	G.O.	A	1	37,500
b.	Second acquisition, about 25 acres (@ \$1500 per acre)	G.O.	B	2	37,500
2.	Development of parks and recreation properties with game courts, recreational buildings, and landscaping improvements.				
a.	First stage, \$20,000 per year	C.R.	B	1-6	120,000
b.	Second stage, \$25,000 per year	C.R.	B	Later	--
3.	City docks and waterfront park, land and improvements *	G.O.	B	4	250,000
4.	Community Center Building, See item III, 3.	--	--	--	--

* Cost estimates are very general on this item and would vary according to location and scope of improvements. The location suggested as Santa Rosa Park, located on west Main Street, would offer the possibilities of a barge port development in connection with the industrial area proposed north of Main Street to Hollywood Blvd. However, an alternate location is indicated on the Civic Center Plan for a central park with waterfront development along Brooks Street. This site would be more costly, but presumably the dock improvements would not be so costly if intended for recreational purposes without the barge port features.

**FT. WALTON BEACH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

V. TOTALS

Item	Description of Project	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	6th Year	6 Year Totals
I.	Street Projects by the City	195,000	147,500	254,600	105,000	68,000	129,000	899,900
II.	Central Area Improvements, Parking	409,000	305,000	46,600	346,600	46,600	41,600	1,195,400
III.	Public Buildings and Community Facilities	200,000	200,000	172,000	90,000			662,000
IV.	Parks and Recreation Facilities	57,500	57,500	20,000	270,000	20,000	20,000	445,000
V.	TOTALS FOR CITY PROJECTS	861,000	710,000	493,200	811,600	134,600	191,400	3,202,300
VI.	Projects to be financed by parking meter receipts or revenue certificates (II.)	404,000	--	41,600	41,600	41,600	41,600	570,400
VII.	Projects to be financed by general revenues or General Obligation Bonds	457,500	710,000	493,200	811,600	134,600	191,400	2,631,900
VIII.	County and State Road Projects (not included in above totals)	327,000	426,000	--	--	638,000	272,000	1,663,000

ABBREVIATIONS:

S/C - State/County Project

G.O. - General Obligation Bonds

R.B. - Revenue Bonds

C.R. - Current Revenues

RECOMMENDED PLANNING PROCEDURE

A comprehensive plan with its textual information, tables, maps and recommendations is something static. To be of value and useful as a guide to future growth and development, it must be activated and be kept up to date because, planning is a continuing operation. Cities, as dynamic organisms, are in a constant state of flux: their growth and varied needs bring on problems that require study and consideration almost daily. The plan of today may need modification and further refinement in another day. The activation of the city plan is therefore a task for some department of government or some agency operating independently of but in close cooperation with the governing body. Such agencies are commonly called Planning Boards, Planning Commissions or Planning and Zoning Commissions, but, regardless of name, their functions are the same.

FORT WALTON BEACH BOARD

Fort Walton Beach currently has a Planning Board known officially as the Municipal Advisory Board. It is composed of 5 members, one of whom is the City Manager. The members of this Board are very able, capable men who have demonstrated their abilities to evaluate the city as a whole and the tributary area thereto; they have also worked in close cooperation with the City Commission as an advisory group. The members of a planning board should always be selected because of their recognized talents, abilities and their standing in the community. And, in its operation the board should endeavor to reflect the combined judgement of informed, civic minded citizens. As a non-compensated board responsible to the governing body it occupies a peculiar position of trust between the people on the one side and the

governing body on the other.

The Planning Board is neither a legislative nor an administrative body; it is primarily advisory to the governmental body, assisting it in policy matters. It is also a coordinating and research group. It is in a position to make studies, investigations and recommendations to the governing body on diverse matters relating to the physical structure of the city such as streets, parks, playgrounds, parking traffic and on problems relating to economics, fiscal policy and taxation. As a research body, the Planning Board can develop information on growth, population trends, and land uses. Summarily it can review public and private actions that might affect the city plan and recommend to the governing body ordinances, policies, actions and public works to implement the comprehensive plan.

STANDARD CITY PLANNING ENABLING ACT

The Standard City Planning Enabling Act, already law in many states, grants to municipalities the power to make and adopt a city plan and to create by ordinance a planning commission with stipulated powers and duties. The commission shall consist of nine members of which two will be ex-officio. Not only has the commission the power to develop the comprehensive plan but it can prepare and enforce subdivision regulations and exercise a guiding hand in the preparation of zoning regulations.

The legislature of Florida has not yet erected a City Planning Enabling Act but should the 1961 legislature do so, then the Fort Walton Beach Board can be established thereunder with all the powers and duties prescribed therein. But as a precautionary measure, it is recommended that the City of Fort Walton Beach prepare and enact a special enabling act authorizing

it to legally create a planning board and prescribing its duties and powers in detail. Such a special act was adopted several sessions ago for the City of Lakeland under which the Planning Board was legalized and the planning department was established as a function of government.

PROCEDURE

The Planning Board as a non-paid citizen group will not be able to do any of the details of planning or make studies or do any research work. This phase of this work is a staff operation. The magnitude and nature of the staff operation will depend on the size of the community, the nature of the problems and the rate of community development. Few cities can afford complete, full time staff operations or even departments of Planning in their governmental set-up.

In some of our large cities, a Planning Director has been employed who initially acts in all capacities as research specialist, draftsman, counsellor and educator. As the work progressed and both the people and the officials became conversant with the function of the Planner, additional staff was employed - possibly a draftsman. In cities where finances do not permit the employment of a full time planner, arrangements are made with Consultants to handle details with the aid of such local officials as the City Engineer or City Building Official. In this manner the work of the Planning Board can be carried on until such time that a full time director can be financed. Oft times difficult surveys can be made by citizen groups within the community; traffic surveys by Boy Scouts; housing surveys by Boy Scouts and Junior Chamber of Commerce; land use studies by women's organizations.

Now what are some of the things specifically that the Planning Board should do? These are here enumerated:

1. They should become familiar with the broad objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and urge action by the proper political group. They should initiate studies resulting in more detailed plans.
2. They should review the plans and ideas of public and private works to ascertain their affect on the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
3. They should devise ways and means of public education to stimulate and stir to action the public consciousness. The Planning Board can illustrate the benefits to be derived from the plans projected and explain why they are necessary.
4. They should attempt to coordinate the thinking of various public groups with those of the official governing body.
5. All subdivision plats should be referred to the Planning Board prior to approval by the City Commission. In order to give the Planning Board an opportunity to offer suggestions in the formative stages of land subdivision, it should be required that a preliminary plat be submitted to the Planning Board, after which the subdivider can proceed to prepare the final, more detailed plat in greater confidence of the approval of the City.
6. Plans for public works, such as streets, utilities, parking facilities, parks, and other community facilities, should be reviewed by the Planning Board for recommendations involving the coordination of these plans with the Comprehensive Plan of the City.
7. All purchases or sale of city property should be studied by the Planning Board, which should make recommendations regarding the effect of such action on the General Land Use Plan.

As a means of further establishing the importance of the Planning Board in the process of government it is recommended that the Planning Board prepare an annual report to the City Commission, such report to include:

1. An evaluation of the status of the Comprehensive City Plan, including a review of each major element of the Plan. The evaluation should include a discussion of features requiring

immediate attention; problems encountered in public acceptance of the Plan, and modifications recommended to adjust the Plan to changing conditions.

2. A list of specific projects initiated and/or completed during the year under review.
3. A list of specific projects proposed for the coming year including but not necessarily limited to projects involving the expenditure of funds for capital improvements.
4. Annual revision of the Capital Improvements Budget. In order to maintain a Six-Year Capital Improvements Budget it may be necessary to re-schedule some items and it will be necessary each year to extend the budget for an additional year.

FINANCING

Financing is always a problem in any community - large or small. Practically all planning operations will have to be included in the operations budget. A sum of a few thousand dollars will go far to launch the program - say \$7500. As the work progresses from year to year more can be added.

REGIONAL PLANNING

The growth and development of the Fort Walton Beach region justifies a regional planning study and operation. Legislation is currently available to initiate studies. It is therefore suggested that the Planning Board expand its thinking beyond the immediate Fort Walton Beach area into areas contiguous thereto on the west, north and east.