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Planning for the Future: Stuart, Florida

George W. Simons Jr

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PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

STUART, FLORIDA

PREPARED BY
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JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
1956

GEORGE W. SIMONS, JR.

MEM. AM. SOC. C. E.
MEM. INST. OF PLANNERS
MEM. INST. OF TRAFFIC ENGINEERS

PLANNING, ZONING
AND MUNICIPAL
CONSULTANT

TELEPHONE
ELGIN 3-0373

FIRST FEDERAL SAVINGS BUILDING
JACKSONVILLE 2, FLORIDA

September 1, 1956.

Honorable Robert W. Green, Mayor,
Honorable Irving Kanarek,
Honorable Bernard Coker,
Honorable Kenneth Stimmell,
Honorable Earnest Tyner,
Members City Commission,
Stuart, Florida.

Gentlemen:

I have the honor to present herewith our report on the Comprehensive Plan of Stuart prepared pursuant to our agreement of February 22, 1955.

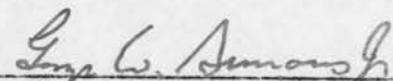
Part One of the comprehensive planning program related to a Land Use inventory and the preparation of the zoning plan and regulations adopted by you on May 22, 1956.

In the conduct of our studies we have been very appreciative of the cooperation extended to us by the various department heads of the city.

In transmitting this final plan report to you we want to again emphasize that it is primarily a flexible guide to future growth and development. What results from it will depend on how well it is accepted and followed.

It has been a pleasure to have served you.

Sincerely yours,


GEORGE W. SIMONS, JR.

GWS:EBB

W. J. C. M. A.

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WHY PLAN?

A Plan is a guide. It portrays how something should be done. By the application of accepted principles and standards the planner seeks to define the best possible ways and means of reaching certain objectives as they relate to the growth and development of the community. A housewife, dreaming about her new home, plans its various rooms and facilities. She is a planner. The owner or operator of a business enterprise evaluates his future needs and plans for them and the industrialist, contemplating his new plant devotes much time and thought to its location, arrangement and size predicated on his market and labor supply analysis. Even the father of the household plans his estate. Planning therefore is not some theoretical, visionary, mystical process but instead, it is the application of practical, orderly thinking to provide for the needs of the future in the most effective, economical and efficient manner.

Planning processes as applied to cities and their environments are not of recent origin. Archeologists have unearthed ancient communities that revealed plans. In medieval times cities were planned for defense purposes within walls and around a central plaza. And within modern times, the ideas of planning were widely applied. In early America, General Oglethorpe laid out the nucleus of a plan at Savannah, Georgia; Isaiah Hart laid out the basic pattern of Jacksonville and John Jackson, a land surveyor, delineated the first street pattern for Tampa. General Washington, aided by the French engineer, L'Enfant, drew up the initial plan of the capitol city. And even Stypmann conceived the initial plan for Stuart. In more recent times hundreds of cities thruout America, large and small, have

engaged in planning activities of a diverse nature to keep abreast of growth and the demands of citizens for needed services. So in reality, the art or science of planning is old.

Unfortunately most of the basic plans of cities were delineated in pioneering days when the nation was predominantly agricultural and rural. The initial plans were restricted in scope primarily because the founders were unable to anticipate the type of development and growth that subsequently followed. Railroads were then the principal means of transportation, even between communities only ten or twenty miles apart. Animals were not only the beast of burden in the fields but transported people and goods within the community but only a few people then could afford a horse and carriage which meant that people were obliged to live close together, near their work so they could walk back and forth. Interurban roads were scarce and those in existence were poor. Within the cities roadway improvements were meager. The problems of traffic circulation, congestion, parking and commercial decentralization were then unknown; municipal problems were then comparatively simple. The City Limit line in those earlier days had a meaning and beyond it there was no urban fringe of development and the automobile was not a factor to revolutionize the serenity and tempo of living.

The influx of people into an area and the advent of the automobile marked the beginning of a new era in city building and rebuilding. The automobile afforded the people their first opportunity to break away from the closely compact areas of dwellings and business and get desirable sites in the more desirable open spaces. Following the wider use of the automo-

bile better highways began to appear, County, State and coordinated interstate systems, and with these came the transition from rural to urban composition. Today nearly two-thirds of the American people live in towns or cities and in Florida, more than sixty-five per cent. Naturally rapid growth under the new and changing conditions of technology has motivated many people to plan for the future. In fact planning for the needs of the new era has become an established fact and the function of government at its several levels.

So today, confronted by innumerable and complex problems, the officials of cities are diligently looking ahead and planning. How can the lands of the city be used to best advantage and still preserve values and the tax base? How can the street system be planned to distribute more effectively the increasing volumes of traffic and thereby minimize congestion and hazard? What plans can be provided to park automobiles within the Central Business District and elsewhere thereby preserving the value and integrity of the commercial areas? What areas and how many should be set aside for parks and recreation facilities to meet the increasing demands of the old as well as the young? What additional utilities will be required, and, with the increasing complexity of the governmental structure, what added space will be required for administration purposes and services? These are but a few of the problems that are constantly arising for the decision of municipal officials. Their solution depends on effective and continuous planning.

The City of Stuart and its environs are growing and in consequence thereof the City Commission is endeavoring to develop plans to provide for

that growth. Obviously their plans cannot either consist of a rigid framework or even anticipate many of the problems that may arise. But they can at least establish a guide, sufficiently flexible to yield to such changes as may arise.

Plans, even of a general nature, must be kept alive and alert to avoid stagnation and this can be done only by the support of an intelligent, enthusiastic citizenship. The officials of the city are limited in the extent and scope of their powers but with an alert citizenship interest, the governmental power can be expanded. A commission supported wholeheartedly by a citizenship support and interest can get the laws necessary to make the city the kind of place they want it to become. But planning is the beginning of this cooperative venture into city rebuilding.

HISTORICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The City of Stuart, county seat of Martin County, is located 38 miles north of West Palm Beach and 261 miles south of Jacksonville on the east coast of Florida, in one of the most rapidly growing and developing regions of the State. According to population estimates prepared by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research of Florida State University, Martin County had a population increase in excess of 17% in the years 1950 to July 1, 1954.

Settlers and homesteaders began moving into the Saint Lucie River region in the '80's and '90's. Among those pioneers was one Ernest Stypmann who was engaged in doing geodetic survey work on the lower east coast of Florida. The area now occupied by the City of Stuart particularly appealed to Stypmann so he settled there. In 1886, on petition of Stypmann and others a post office established in the settlement was given the name of Potsdam which name however was changed later to Stuart, after the first telegraph operator located there in the railroad construction.

In February, 1894, Mr. Flagler extended his railroad from Fort Pierce into West Palm Beach, thereby connecting the Stuart area directly with the north.

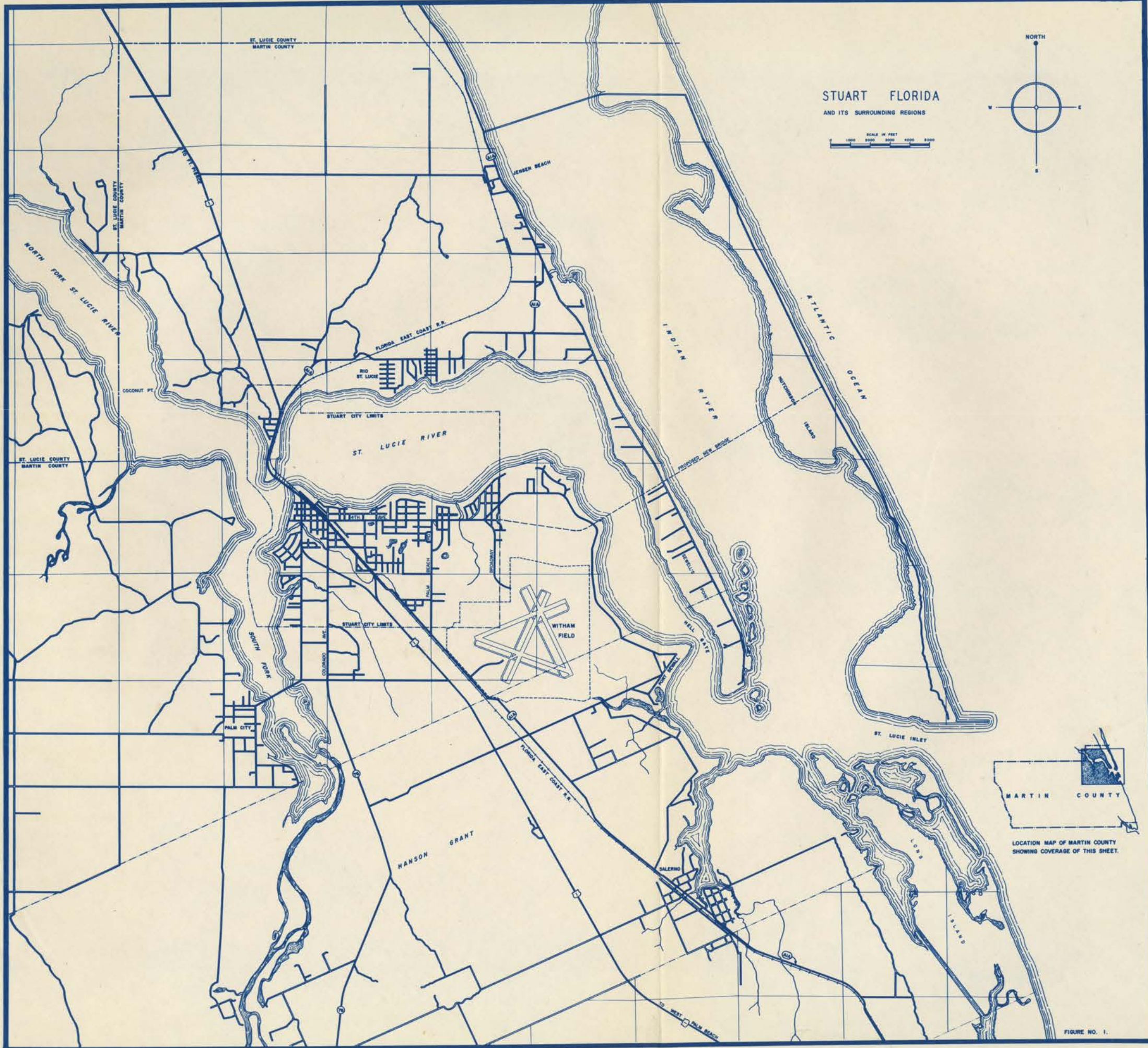
In the fall of 1895 just after the railroad had been extended thru Stuart, Stypmann laid out the first town site, that triangular area lying west of the railroad, north of Fourth Street and east of what is now U. S. 1. He sold the first lot to a school teacher, G. Kidner in 1895 - a lot just south of the Stuart Hotel.

Altho Stuart was identified as a fishing village and trading post in the latter part of the nineteenth century prior to the construction of the Florida East Coast Railway, it did not become an incorporated town until 1915 with a population of about 500 people. At that time Stuart was located in Palm Beach County. Martin County was created by the legislature in 1925 from portions of Saint Lucie and Palm Beach Counties.

In the frontier days (1880) the entire population between the Saint Lucie River and the Keys, then Dade County, was only 527 and by 1890, only 861.

In the '90's when the railroad pushed its way along the narrow strip of east coast highlands, the lands were virgin. To the west lay the vast, mysterious and largely unexplored region known as the "Everglades" and to the east, the ocean. It was an area particularly appealing to Mr. Flagler because of its salubrious winter climate and the natural scenic beauty of its waterways and palms. It was noteworthy that the coastal bulge of the Florida shore line was nearest the Gulf Stream in this area - that warm stream of water flowing northward in the ocean from the Caribbean. Climate, scenery and fishing were then the principal natural resources of the area.

With the completion of the railroad into West Palm Beach in 1894 and into Miami in 1896, the great economic potential of the lower east coast was then opened to the world. Growth and development then started. In the forty year period, 1910 to 1950, the population of the area (Saint Lucie County to Dade County) increased from 21,567 to 721,692 - nearly thirty-four times and its resources and economic possibilities were opened to exploration and development.



STUART FLORIDA

AND ITS SURROUNDING REGIONS

SCALE IN FEET
0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000



LOCATION MAP OF MARTIN COUNTY
SHOWING COVERAGE OF THIS SHEET.

Today that area looked upon earlier as the "mysterious Everglades" is being controlled by great engineering works. As a result of the comprehensive drainage and water control projects, extensive regions have been opened to agricultural pursuits and cattle raising. And along the narrow coastal fringe many flourishing cities and towns have come into being and grown lustily. Among them is Stuart.

Geography plays an important role in the growth and economy of Stuart. Located on the northern tip of a peninsula is the main portion of the corporate area (Figure 1) with the South Fork of the Saint Lucie River on the west and the main stream of the Saint Lucie River on the north and east near its confluence with the Indian River. Across the river to the north on a second peninsula lies another portion of the city between the North Fork of the Saint Lucie River and the Saint Lucie River. East of the city is the Saint Lucie Inlet to the ocean, one of the oldest inlets on the east Coast of Florida. No locality in Florida is more favored with water ways and natural beauty - a most alluring site.

Geography places Stuart in the center of a region that has great prospects for growth and diversified improvement. To the north is Jensen Beach, to the south, Salerno and Hobe Sound and to the southwest, Palm City. To the east across the Saint Lucie River, between it and the Indian River, lies the long narrow peninsula of Sewell's Point and farther to the east across the Indian River, lies Hutchinson Island which with Sewell's Point will soon be connected directly with Stuart by a bridge. This improvement will make both Sewell's Point and Hutchinson Island readily accessible to Stuart. Currently neither of these points can be reached directly from

Stuart, the Hutchinson Island area being accessible only by bridge at Jensen Beach.

In addition to the new bridge to Sewell's Point and Hutchinson Island, Stuart will be one of the few cities directly accessible by an interchange with the Florida Turnpike now being constructed west of the city. This entrance thru Palm City will still further enhance the city's already strategic position.

As this immediate region surrounding and accessible to Stuart is more intensively developed and populated the importance of the city as the central commercial, trading and cultural center will be accentuated. This development will also contribute to the growth and characteristics of Stuart itself.

Other factors that will contribute to the growth of Stuart and the enhancement of its economy are its transportation facilities. Stuart is located on the "main line". It is served by the Florida East Coast Railway, U. S. 1 highway from north to south, by water on the Intracoastal Waterway and by a limited amount of air service. Reference has already been made to the Turnpike. These various facilities make Stuart easily accessible to all points. Altho none of the commercial air lines yet provide passenger service into the Stuart Air Port (witham field), it does provide a point of entry for private freight and express cargo planes.

The Stuart area is peculiarly adapted to the extensive cultivation of bulbs and flowers for market consumption, many of which are transported by plane and rail to the northern markets.

No locality is better adapted to boating and fishing. Altho some com-

mercial fishing originates here, the area is more noted for its pleasure fishing. Thousands of fishermen are attracted to Stuart annually among which many homeseekers are found. Here one can find a variety of fishing grounds both fresh and salt water. Altho an ideal haven for the yachtsman, Stuart needs additional marina facilities at its front door readily accessible to the Intracoastal Waterway.

The economy of Stuart is characterized primarily by servicing and commercial enterprises available to the city and surrounding area. And as the population of the area increases the more important will Stuart become as its principal economic center. Some industry may come into the immediate area but if so, it will doubtless be of a specialized nature.

POPULATION GROWTH AND CHARACTERISTICS

From a population approximating 600 in 1915, Stuart has grown steadily, but not spectacularly, to a population of nearly 3,000 in 1950 - an increase of 500% in the thirty-five year period. In the "boom" era of the 1920's, the city experienced its greatest rate of growth (150%) increasing from 778 in 1920 to 1,924 in 1930. In the decades, 1930 to 1940 and 1940 to 1950, the rates of population increase were 27% and 19.5% respectively. Altho no specific or authentic census data are available for years since 1950, it is estimated from building permits, electric and water connections and other indices that Stuart currently has within its corporate area about 4,000 people.

TABLE I

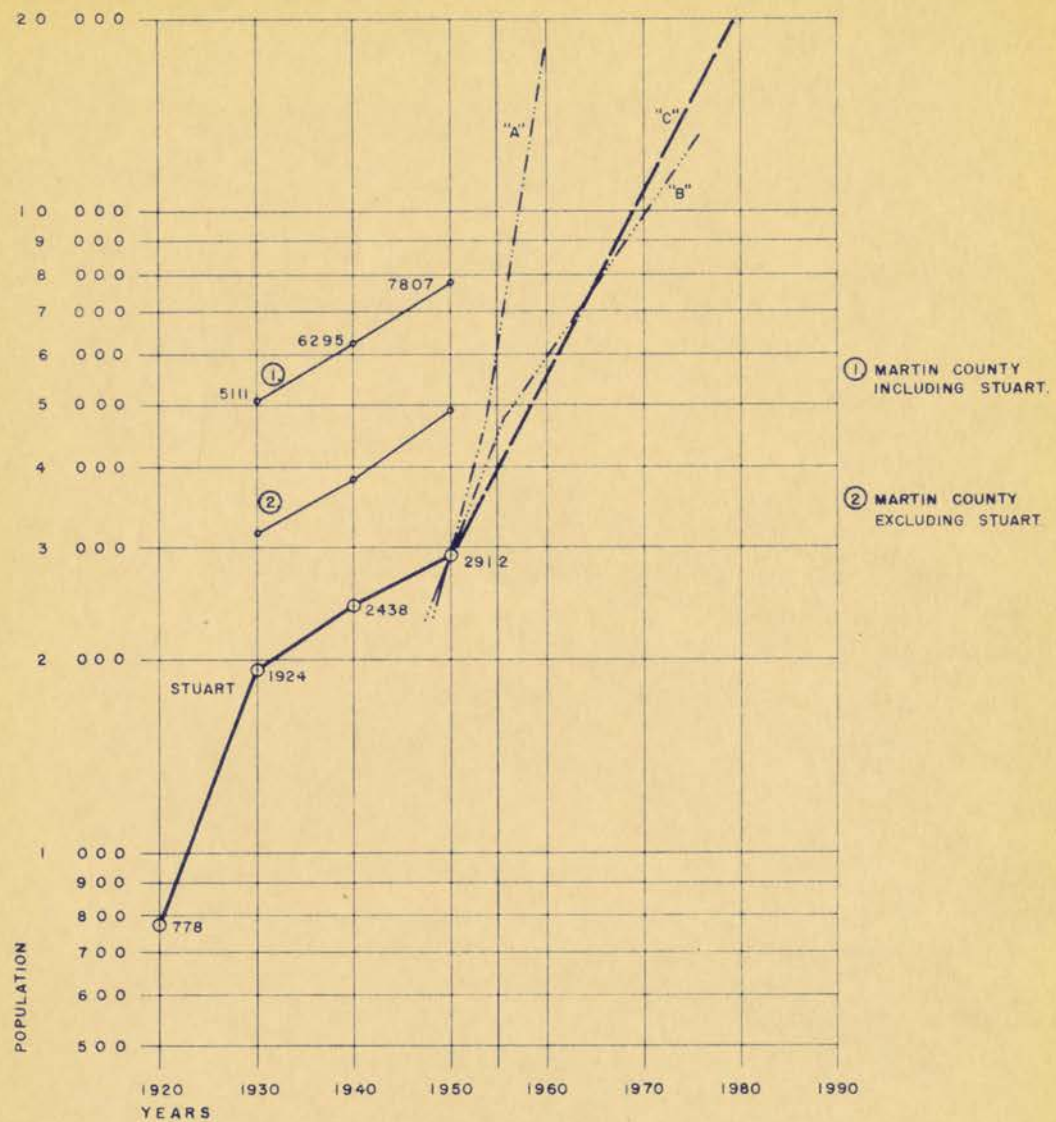
POPULATION GROWTH, STUART AND MARTIN COUNTY

	STUART			MARTIN COUNTY		
	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>PER CENT</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>PER CENT</u>
1920	778	179	30.0	--	--	--
1930	1,924	1,146	150.0	5,111	--	--
1940	2,438	514	27.0	6,295	1,184	23.2
1950	2,912	474	19.5	7,807	1,512	24.0

Table I shows the population growth of Stuart from 1920 and that of Martin County from 1930. Whereas the population of the city increased 19.5% in the decade 1940 to 1950 and that of the County including the city increased 24%, the County population exclusive of the city increased 27% in the same decade. This emphasizes the trend of development in the areas surrounding the city, revealing that the population included only within

the corporate area does not reflect correctly the whole population that considers Stuart its central city and economic base.

In the area between the eastern city limits and the river including Snug Harbor, Sunrise Inn and Port Sewell and in the areas known as Sewell's Point, Rio, Coconut Park, Palm City, Jensen Beach and intervening sections, there are many families residing and many businesses operating that influence and shape the economic activity and growth of Stuart just as much as if they were integral parts of the city. From these places many people travel to Stuart for professional or other services and to shop. The growth potential therefore of these various areas should be considered a part of the growth of metropolitan Stuart.



PROJECTED POPULATION OF STUART "C", AS COMPARED WITH THE PAST GROWTH OF WEST PALM BEACH "A", AND FT. PIERCE "B", SINCE THE TIME THEY HAD THE 1950 POPULATION OF STUART.

POPULATION GROWTH
1920 TO 1950
WITH PROJECTION TO 1980

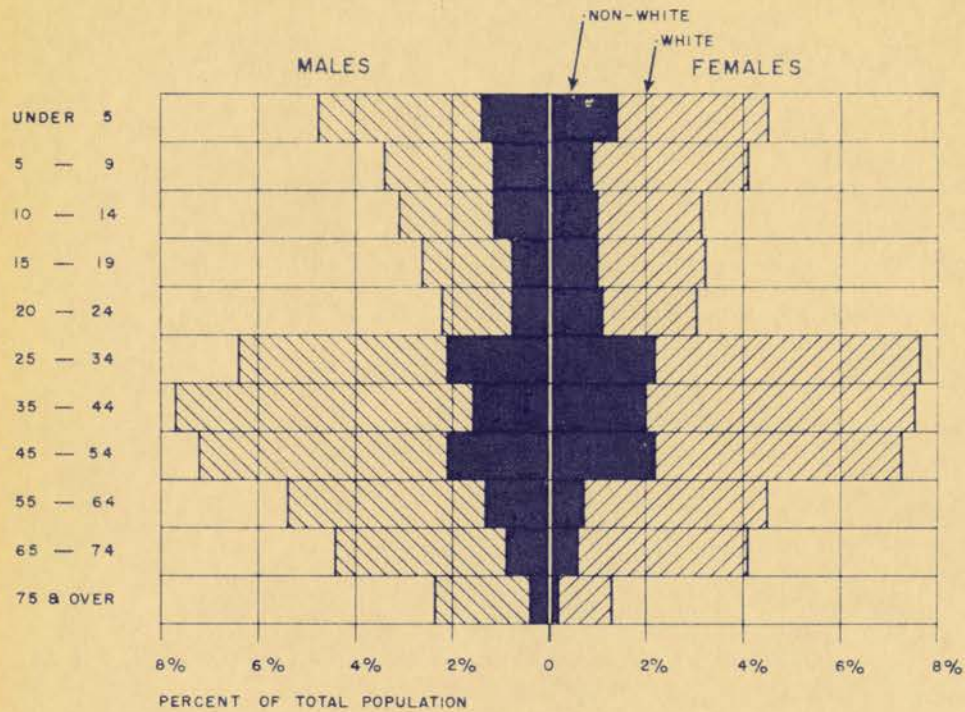
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STUDY
FOR THE CITY OF
STUART, FLORIDA

PROBABLE FUTURE GROWTH

Today Florida is the fastest growing state east of the Mississippi River and one of the three fastest growing in the nation. According to population studies made by both the University of Miami and Florida State University, the southeastern sector of Florida is the fastest growing area in the state. Confronted by the fantastic growth now being experienced by most east coast cities and equipped only with meager information since 1950, it is difficult to forecast with any great degree of accuracy what population Stuart will have at any given future time. Obviously the population at any future date would depend on the magnitude of the corporate area at such time. From an economic standpoint however Stuart is as much interested in the population of an area within a radius of five to ten miles as in growth within its corporate area.

There are currently within the present corporate area some 1,700 vacant lots on which dwellings or other structures can be erected. In addition there are vacant areas that can still be subdivided into several hundred or more lots. So it is possible to accomodate some 5,000 or more additional people in Stuart now.

Table I and Figure 2 show that since 1930 the rate of growth has averaged about 23% per decade or about 2.4% per year. At such a rate the 1956 population would approximate 3,350 people but since 1950 the growth based upon the erection of more than 275 single family dwelling units within the city the rate of growth has exceeded the rates between 1930 and 1950 and instead of 3,350, the 1956 population is nearer 4,000.



AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION

TOTAL 1950 POPULATION ----- 2912

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STUDY FOR THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA

On Figure 2 are shown graphically the population growth experiences of Fort Pierce and West Palm Beach since each had a population approximating 3,000. These respective growth experiences show what could take place at Stuart even tho its past rate of growth has been less than that experienced by either of those neighboring places. Should the population growth of Stuart between 1950 and 1960 be accelerated which is highly probable, it would be reasonable to anticipate a population of 6,500 to 7,000 in 1960 based on the present corporate area. So in view of such a probability it would be the better part of wisdom to predicate future planning on a population of at least 15,000. And in so far as the area tributary to Stuart is involved, within a radius of five to ten miles, an additional 10,000 should be anticipated. In other words, Stuart and its surrounding area should make plans for 25,000 people.

AGE GROUPINGS

Figure 3 shows the percentage division of the 1950 Stuart population by age groups, white and colored, male and females. 23% of the population was less than 15 years of age. The age group 25-54 accounted for 43.9%; in this group is found the major working people of the community. It is interesting however to note that the group in excess of 54 is relatively large (22%); in this group are found many of the retired. The percentage, 75 and over, is also relatively large but typical of the area. While the colored groups follow generally the pattern of whites, after 55 the colored group falls off rapidly. The effect of the post war births is reflected in the earliest age groups.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The population of Stuart in 1950 was divided almost equally between males and females and of the total, 26.5% of it were negroes (Table II).

TABLE IISEX AND RACIAL COMPOSITION

	<u>MALES</u>	<u>FEMALES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
White	1,047	1,094	2,141
Negro	384	387	771 (26.5%)
TOTAL	1,431	1,481	2,912

In 1950, of the total population, 2,286 people were 14 years of age and older (78.5%) from which reservoir the labor force of the city was recruited. 353 people were age 65 and over.

Of those 14 years of age and older in 1950, 1,223 were engaged in some form of production, servicing or other economic enterprise, as indicated in Table III.

TABLE III
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION

	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Agriculture, fisheries	71	30	101
Construction	141	1	142
Manufacturing	42	37	79
Transportation, communications, public utilities	90	15	105
Wholesale & retail trade	125	140	265
Finance, insurance & real estate	85	16	101
Business & repair services	38	2	40
Personal services	90	124	214
Entertainment & amusement services	14	3	17
Professional services	38	68	106
Public administration	56	9	65
Industries not reported	6	6	12
	796	427	1,223

That much of the economy of Stuart relates to businesses or enterprises of a servicing nature is revealed by the fact that 37% of those employed are in the various servicing enterprises. Add to this another 24% engaged in wholesale and retail businesses shows that more than 60% of the workers are in the business of service. Manufacturing has contributed little to the community.

These data reflect the importance of Stuart as a central trading and servicing center for a tributary area extending far beyond the corporate confines of the city. They also indicate to a degree, the type of city Stuart is. In the future a limited amount of industry may locate in Stuart but even so its servicing characteristic will predominate because as the city and its tributary area grows the servicing enterprise will be expanded and enhanced.

AREA GROWTH AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The first subdivisions of land into blocks and lots that resulted in the initial pattern of development were located in what may now be termed the northwest quadrant of the present city. The original Potsdam subdivision of Stypmann, the Kitching Addition, the Frazier Addition and Woodlawn Park were all located between the Frazier Creek and the railroad. South of Frazier Creek between the Palm City Road and the South Fork of the Saint Lucie River the Bessey Addition was laid out. All of these subdivisions, excepting Potsdam, came into being during 1912-1914. Simultaneously subdivisions were created north of the railroad from the railroad bridge to Stypmann Avenue. In this area where the Danforth's and Tero subdivisions east to Colorado Avenue in which the main business district is now located and to the east of Colorado Avenue, the Porter, High School, East End, Oak Park, Lainhart and Porters, Hillcrest, Stypmanns, McDonalds and Bogans subdivisions all of which also came into being during the 1912-1914 period. In the Lainhart and Porter's subdivision south of Fourth Street the new Martin County Court House was erected following the creation of the County in 1935. In the 1912-1914 period the initial city building was most active. In 1915, the city was incorporated, extending from the Palm Beach Road on the east along the south section lines of Sections 4 and 5 to the Palm City Road thence southeasterly to Poppleton Creek and along the meandering shore line of the river channel. Not again until the '20's did an extensive wave of land subdivisions hit the city, both to the south and to the east. In 1925 the corporate area was again extended.

Altho the site of the corporate area is generally level the drainage basins of the three creeks, Frazier, Poppleton and Kreuger, have influenced and directed land subdivision practices. The margins of these streams, about ten feet above mean sea level are still subject to overflow.

EXISTING LAND USES

CITY OF

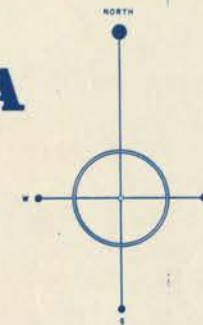
STUART, FLORIDA

CITY LIMITS

SCALE IN FEET
0 400 800 1200 1600 2000

MAP DRAWN APRIL 1965
FROM INFORMATION COMPILED
FROM AERIAL SURVEY PHOTOS
TAKEN 8-19-54

PREPARED BY
GEORGE W. SIMONS, JR.
PLANNING CONSULTANT
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA



ST. LUCIE RIVER

- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE.
- TWO FAMILY RESIDENCE.
- MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENCE.
- COMMERCIAL.
- INDUSTRIAL.
- PUBLIC --- SEMI PUBLIC.

CITY LIMITS

FIGURE No.4

LAND USES

City Planning is basically land use planning - planning for the most advantageous, adaptable uses of the site on which the city is located. In as much as the city is made up of numerous land subdivisions which in most instances become parts of liveable neighborhoods it is desirable to coordinate them into a harmonious whole easily accessible to each other, to the central business district and to places where people may be employed.

One of the first steps therefore in any planning study is to make an inventory of land uses to determine the nature of the city, how it has expanded during the years and to show how the various land uses are distributed. This survey was extended into adjacent areas beyond the corporate limits which consider Stuart their trading center.

An examination of the Land Use Map (Figure 4) discloses several important features that have influenced the physical pattern of Stuart. First is the Florida East Coast Railway extending diagonally from the northwest to southeast across the western half of the corporate area dividing it into two parts. Secondly, the courses of Frazier and Poppleton Creeks draining into the South Fork of the Saint Lucie River and thirdly, Kreuger Creek in the eastern half of the corporate area draining northward into the Saint Lucie River which as previously stated have influenced the design and locations of subdivisions, the street systems of the respective areas, as well as the street system of the city as a whole.

The two most heavily utilized areas at this time are (1) that north of Frazier Creek and west of North Florida Avenue, and (2) that east of the railroad in the central part of the city, occupied by the negro population.

The former includes the central business district and the original Stypmann plat.

As the city expanded eastward and southward from the original town-site, lands bordering the South Fork of the Saint Lucie River on the west and those along the Saint Lucie River on the north were subdivided into lots on many of which single family dwellings are now located.

Outside the central core (area north of Frazier Creek and west of Colorado Avenue), development is not dense and many large vacant areas are still available for development. Some of these however encompass low marginal lands adjacent to the headwaters of the aforementioned creeks. The most sparsely and least developed lands lie in the southeasterly section of the city toward the airport.

Across the Saint Lucie River bridge to the north the lands have been or are being developed principally to accomodate high quality homes. Development in this direction extends northward into the County on a very substantial basis (Coconut Park).

As one examines the Existing Land Use map the predominance of single family dwellings is impressive both in the section between the river and Stypmann Boulevard and the South Fork and U. S. 1.

Since its inception the Central Business District of Stuart has been confined to a relatively small area divided by the railroad, in the northwest extremity of the city. Most of the diversified businesses lie north of the track. Because of the railroad the business district south of the tracks has not kept pace with that on the north side. The opening of Colorado Avenue south of the tracks will however have a tendency to equalize

the importance of the two sides. With an increased growth southward along the South Fork and in the areas between Colorado Avenue and the Federal Highway (U. S. 1), the business potential of the area north of U. S. 1 should assume a greater commercial importance.

The businesses located along U. S. 1 south to the city limits are of the type usually found along such a highway - restaurants, motels, filling stations, souvenir stands and the like.

It is noteworthy that within the approximate center of the city, south of Fourth Street but north of the railroad, a considerable area of land has been dedicated to public uses - park, recreational field and school. The Martin County Court House is located at the westerly end of this area. A large park area has also been dedicated to public purposes on the north side of Frazier Creek east of U. S. 1 of which a small marina is a part. A park area has also been dedicated in the westerly part of the city on Fourth Street between Palm Beach Road and Coconut Drive. Then finally, another public area has been reserved west of the Central Business District between Flagler Avenue and the river, on which the Civic Center is located. In the central part of the corporate area south and east of the negro area and also east of the Palm Beach Road, south of Tenth Street, the City owns considerable land on one portion of which a negro community center is located.

The land use map reveals clearly the course development has followed in the past and the large amount of land still available for development east of the city limits to Port Sewell. The entire river frontage in this area is subdivided and much has been or is being developed with very high quality homes. In this area the exclusive resort hotel Sunrise Inn is

located. Between this river front development and the city limits there are large unsubdivided tracts that will lend themselves to development. However in its development, the city and county cooperating should require an adherence to recognized subdivision standards that will assure the city of a homogeneous, harmonious whole.

Located outside the city in the southeasterly part of the area is the Stuart Airport (Witham Field) used principally by private passenger and cargo planes. Should the use of this airport be intensified in the future, it will have a depreciating effect on adjacent residential properties. The County of the City - or both - should institute a search for a new field more advantageously located, away from residential development and highway hazards. The present land could be more advantageously used for other purposes.

CORPORATE AREA AND RELATIVE LAND USE AREAS

As shown on the map (Figure 4) the corporate area of Stuart does not occupy the whole tip of the peninsula on which it is located. It does however extend northward across the river to include a portion of the peninsula between the North Fork of the Saint Lucie River and the Saint Lucie River known as Speedy Point. The corporate area includes a considerable portion of the Saint Lucie River, North and South Forks. The area as a whole comprises some 4.86 square miles of which 2.0 square miles (43.2%) is water which leaves a land area of 2.8 square miles. Of the land area, 1.9 square miles (69%) is still vacant and undeveloped. This means that only 541.6 acres of the land area of Stuart are developed and utilized for the various purposes shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV
LAND USES IN STUART - DEVELOPED AREA

<u>USE</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>PER CENT</u>	
		<u>STUART</u>	<u>AVERAGE CITY</u>
Single family dwellings	176.6	32.4	31.80
Duplex dwellings	6.5	1.2	4.70
Multiple family dwellings	6.5 189.6	1.2	3.01
Commercial structures	46.1	8.6	3.32
Public and semi-public uses	67.6	12.6	17.60
Industrial and railroad uses	16.1	2.8	11.30
Streets (improved or platted)	<u>222.2</u>	41.2	28.20
	541.6		

Of the 541.6 acres of land developed, 189.6 acres or 35% is utilized by dwelling structures which it will be noted compares favorably with a composite value from a number of smaller communities. As stated previously the single family type of development predominates. It will also be noted that some 41% of the developed area is dedicated to streets or street rights-of-way. Industrial uses are at a minimum. Singularly the proportion of the land devoted to commercial uses in Stuart is greater than that in most of the smaller cities, which may be due to the large populated area Stuart normally serves in addition to the city itself. And, a relatively larger percentage of developed land is used for public or semi-public purposes in Stuart than elsewhere. This is due in large measure to the large public area referred to previously.

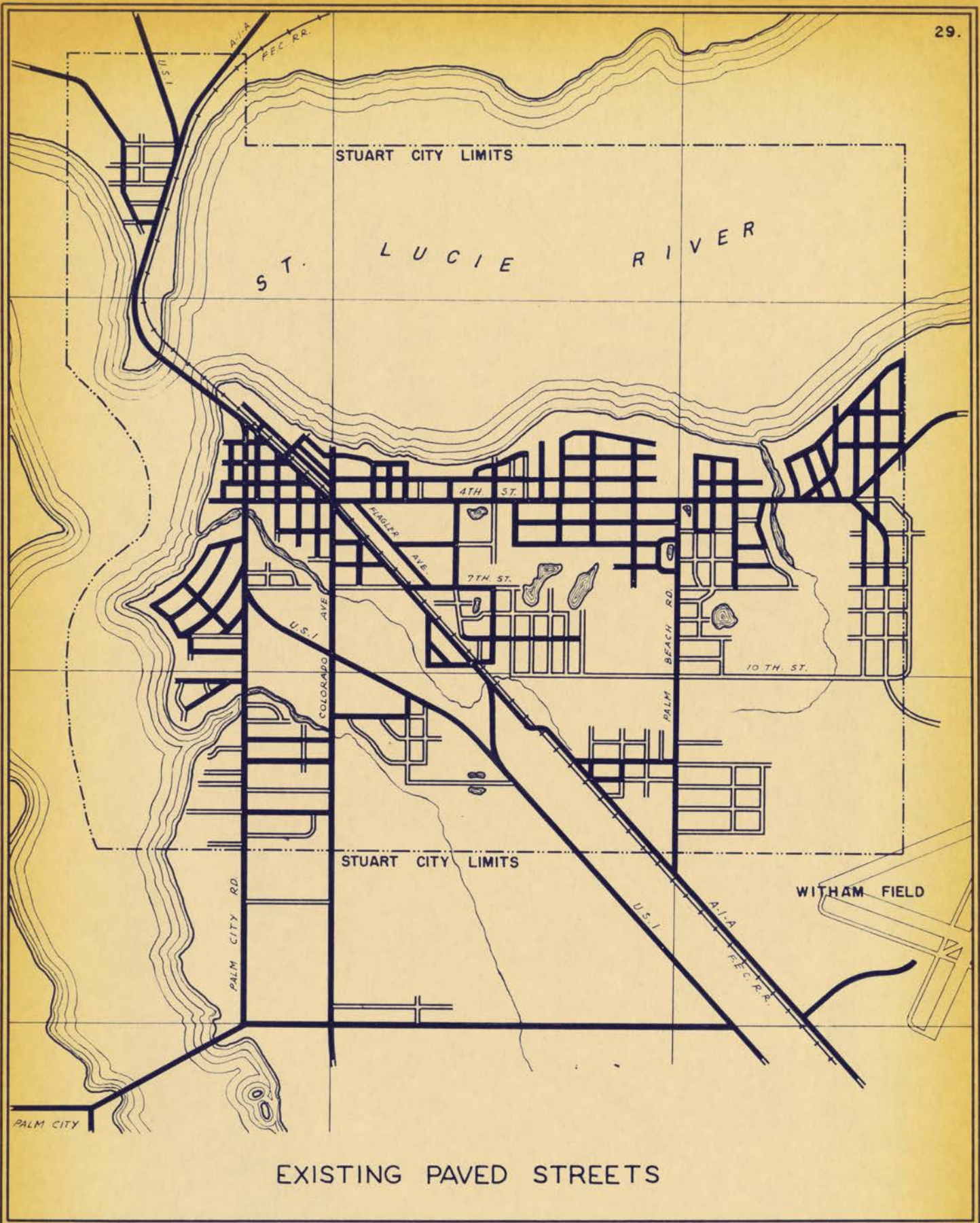
In Table V, the various amounts of land used for the several purposes have been reduced to "acres per 100 people". In a parallel column are shown the composite information from a number of small cities.

TABLE V

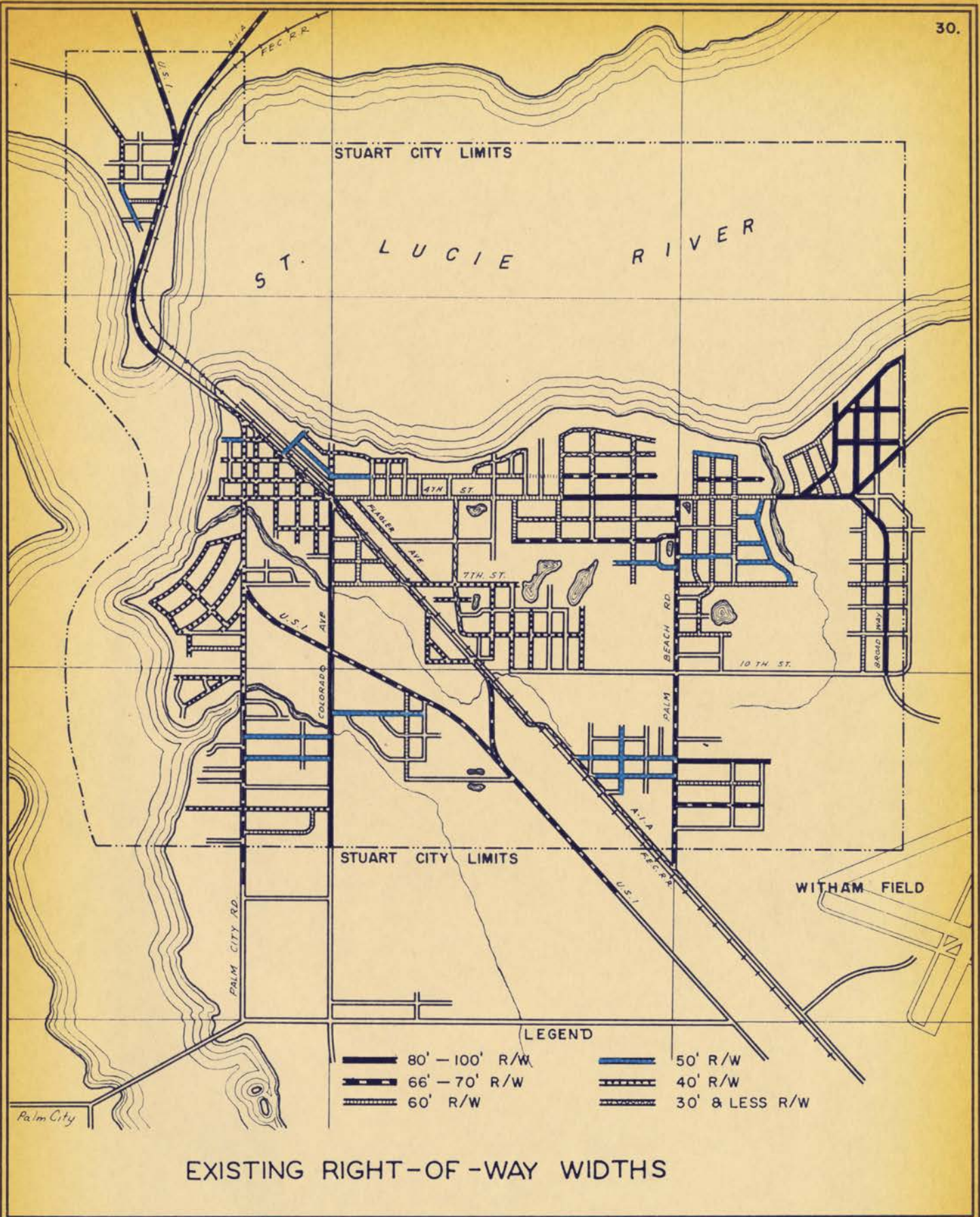
LAND USES IN ACRES PER 100 POPULATION

<u>USES</u>	<u>ACRES PER 100 POPULATION</u>	
	<u>STUART</u>	<u>AVERAGE CITY</u>
Single family dwellings	4.620	2.19
Duplex dwellings	0.171	0.33
Multiple dwellings	0.171	0.21
Commercial	1.210	0.23
Public and semi-public	1.760	1.21
Industrial and railroad	0.423	0.78
(Streets (improved and platted)	5.850	1.94

Studies conducted thruout the United States have shown conclusively that there is a relationship between population and the amount of land that can be absorbed for commercial or other uses. On the basis of Table V one can reasonably anticipate the future probable absorption of land for the various uses. Today 176.6 acres of land are utilized by single family dwellings. when the population reaches 6,000, approximately 272 acres will be needed and at 10,000, 462 acres.



COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STUDY
FOR THE CITY OF
STUART, FLORIDA



COMPREHENSIVE · PLANNING STUDY
FOR THE CITY OF
STUART, FLORIDA

STREET SYSTEM

The street system of the community is the structural framework around which the city grows and develops. Where there are no streets or street improvements there is little or no growth. The street pattern as a whole, resulting from the street plans of the various subdivisions, is influenced by natural and man made barriers such as waterways, depressed drainage areas, railroads and other features. This is particularly true at Stuart. Altho the street system in the aggregate follows the rectilinear gridiron pattern deviations therefrom are observed in areas adjacent to water frontages where streets have followed the course of the water ways.

Examination of Figures 5 and 6 showing existing improved streets and existing rights-of-way show how the street framework of Stuart was formed thru the years. They also reveal the effects of the various barriers. Only one street - Fourth Street - extends continuously from east to west thru the corporate area. The Palm City Road on the west, Colorado Avenue and the Palm Beach Road are the only streets that serve continuously from north to south.

Prior to 1932 the Old Dixie Highway followed and paralleled the railroad thru the city crossing the railroad from the south to north side north of Fourteenth Street. In 1932 the State Road Department rerouted the south-bound highway (U. S. 1) into its present course, leaving the Palm City Road at a point near its intersection with Bryant Avenue in the Bessey Second Addition. U.S. 1 therefore now affords a continuous thru artery from the south and north thru the city. Altho U. S. 1, scheduled for widening, will always retain its importance as a main channel of traffic flow thru the

city, it will soon be augmented by the Turnpike being constructed to the west, which will doubtless relieve much of the thru traffic volume now using U. S. 1.

From Figure 5 of improved streets it is apparent that improvements have been made as required by development. No effort has been made as yet to develop a comprehensive coordinated street system tying together more advantageously the various parts of the city.

Unfortunately to reach the principal part of the Central Business District it is necessary to cross railroad tracks at grade. Coming from the south on U. S. 1, the Central Business District can be reached via the Palm Beach Road or Colorado Avenue. At the latter point a hazardous, confusing grade crossing is encountered. At this same point Fourth Street and the Old Dixie also intersect on the south side of the tracks. Westerly of Colorado Avenue, two additional grade crossings are encountered, one at the northerly end of Albany Avenue and the second at Saint Lucie Avenue adjacent to the depot. To minimize the hazards of grade crossings it is recommended that the one at the northerly end of Albany Avenue be closed.

Of the present street system, Fourth Street will become increasingly important because from its easterly extension the new toll bridge will be constructed across to Sewall's Point and Hutchinson Island where a connection will be made with a new A-1 A northward to Jensen Beach.

Right-of-way widths are important features of a street system and in so far as possible should be standardized. When most of the subdivisions of Stuart were platted the automobile was not yet a formidable factor in guiding street design and little thought was given to their various func-

tions. Then too, in the absence of any control over subdivision design each developer selected a right-of-way width most advantageous to him without regard to the effect such selection would have on the street system of the city as a whole.

Figure 6, right-of-way widths, show that street right-of-way widths vary from 30 feet and less to 100 feet with widths of 40 feet predominant. The more recent subdivisions in the eastern part of the city, east of the Palm Beach Road, observed more generous widths varying from 60 to 100 feet with a liberal allocation of widths of 80 feet. West of Palm Beach Road in the initial corporate area widths of 30 and 40 feet predominate.

Currently in the design of subdivisions it is unwise to provide right-of-way widths for streets of less than 60 feet which will permit the construction of roadways sufficiently wide to accomodate the volumes of flowing traffic and provide for curbside parking.

THE MAJOR STREET PLAN

The primary object of a major street plan is to provide a framework of principal and proposed streets to facilitate and expedite the circulation of traffic into and thru the city and between its various parts. It is a framework that seeks to encourage the distribution of land development in the years that lie ahead, minimize areas of congestion and conserve the integrity and character of residential neighborhoods. It involves street widenings where necessary, street extensions, new streets and the elimination of existing defects. It is not a plan of which all parts need be constructed at once; some portions may not be needed for years but when the time arrives the guide is available.

Obviously not all the streets comprising the street system of the city are of equal importance. Such streets as U. S. 1, Palm City Road, Fourth Street, Colorado Avenue, Palm Beach Road and Saint Lucie Drive, are of primary significance in the over-all circulation of traffic. Other streets, as connecting links between various neighborhoods or sections of the city, serve as secondary streets. A third class of street is that which serves primarily as access to residential properties and this street comprises by far the greatest percentage of streets in the whole system. Consequently in the design of the major street plan attention is directed primarily to streets in the first and second classifications.

13A #13

On Figure 4 showing a general land use plan for Stuart, the various elements of the Major Street Plan are imposed.

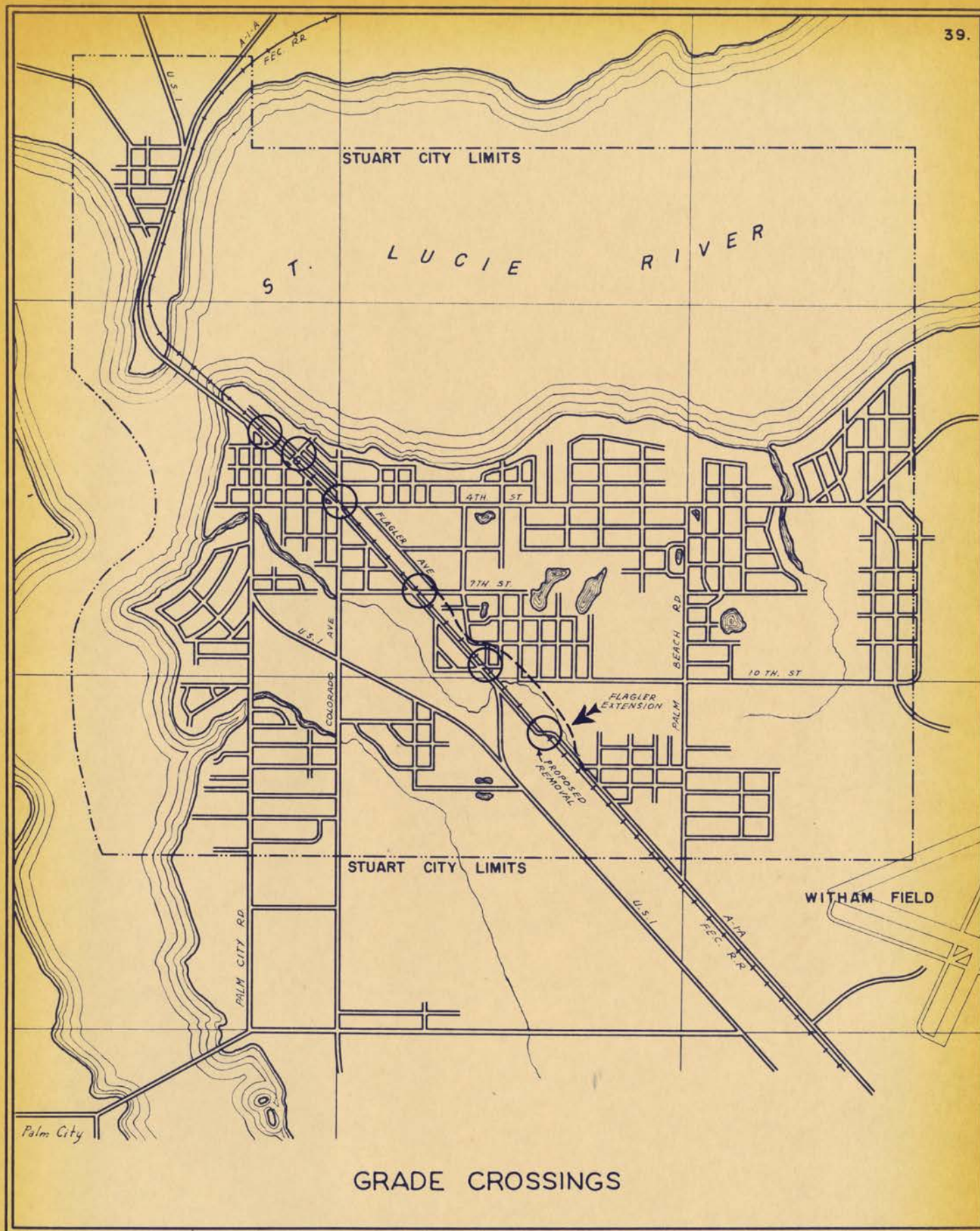
1. Fourth Street, from the Central Business District easterly to Hutchinson Island will be a principal component in the Major Plan. As the city expands easterly and both Sewell's Point and the Hutchinson Island are further developed, Fourth Street will assume an increasingly important role in the traffic circulation pattern of Stuart. It will not only serve the developed areas between it and the river but areas now undeveloped to the east as well. It will also serve traffic originating south of Fourth Street and that entering the Business District via the Palm Beach Road. Currently the right-of-way width of Fourth Street varies from 60 to 80 feet. Between the railroad and Stypmann Avenue the roadway width is 50 feet but east thereof, only 26 feet. From its present eastern extremity easterly a right-of-way width of 100 feet should be provided and the sixty foot sections where possible within the city should be widened to 80 feet. A roadway of 50 to 54 feet should be anticipated thruout its length.
2. Seventh Street presents possibilities of being developed into a valuable secondary street to ultimately relieve the pressure from Fourth Street. Seventh Street is now only intermittently developed. In the plan of major streets it would be developed from the Federal Highway (U. S. 1) on the west to Park Avenue on the east and then ultimately be extended easterly to Saint Lucie Drive. Altho the latter portion lies outside the present city subdividers of land in this undeveloped area should be prevailed upon to allow for the ultimate extension of Seventh Street when these areas are subdivided. The present right-of-

way widths of Seventh Street vary from 40 to 60 feet and its roadway widths vary from 16 to 40 feet. Future plans of Seventh Street should contemplate a right-of-way of not less than 60 feet thruout and a roadway of at least 40 feet.

3. On the north side of the railroad Flagler Avenue should be extended southeasterly to intersect with the Old Dixie where it now crosses the track. Between this extension and the railroad valuable industrial property would be made available and a direct route provided into the Central District. The right-of-way of Flagler Avenue should be at least 60 feet wide with a roadway of at least 40 feet.
4. Coconut Road should be extended from its intersection with the proposed Flagler Avenue extension easterly to the Palm Beach Road and thence easterly to the Saint Lucie Drive. The right-of-way should be at least 60 feet wide with a roadway ultimately 40 feet.
5. Similarly, Fourteenth Street should be opened ultimately from the Old Dixie eastward. A portion of this between the Old Dixie and Palm Beach Road has a right-of-way width of 50 feet but that east of the Palm Beach Road is now 80 feet. Because of the Air Port this road should be brought into Broadway.
6. South of the city limits a primary road should be included in the overall framework extending from U. S. 1 on the east to the PalmCity bridge on the west. This road is now improved but ultimately its right-of-way width should be at least 80 feet and its roadway at least 40 feet. With the completion of the Turnpike this road will assume a greater importance because of its connection with U. S. 1.

7. Manor Drive should ultimately be extended eastward from Colorado Avenue to U. S. 1 with a right-of-way at least 60 feet wide and a roadway of 40 feet.
8. Colorado Avenue will develop into the principal north-south street in the west half of the city. To the city limits on the south, from the railroad, it now has right-of-way widths of 80 and 100 feet. Currently the roadway width from the railroad to U. S. 1 is 62 feet but south thereof it is reduced to 18 feet. Ultimately a roadway width of at least 40 feet should extend south of U. S. 1 to the east-west road connecting with the Palm City bridge.
9. The Palm City Road, known in its northern part as Federal Highway, has right-of-way widths of 40 and 66 feet. The roadway south of its intersection with U. S. 1 is only 18 feet wide. The width of 66 feet or more should be provided thruout the distance from the Palm City bridge to the intersection with U. S. 1, and the roadway should be at least 40 feet. This road will also be an important access to and from the city and the Turnpike.
10. Palm Beach Road (Maryland Avenue) is a valuable street in the eastern half of the city from the Old Dixie north to Fourth Street. It has currently a right-of-way width of 70 feet but improved only with a roadway of 18 feet. The right-of-way for a primary street is adequate but ultimately the roadway should be widened to at least 40 feet and be extended southward to U. S. 1.

11. In the east part of the city Broadway from Fourth Street south has a right-of-way width of 100 feet with a roadway of 21 feet. This street will be an important link in a circumferential highway connecting the north east with the southwest. The roadway should be widened ultimately.
12. Extending southerly and southwesterly from the southern extremity of Broadway a new street should be projected with a right-of-way width of at least 80 feet. This street should cross the tracks at the point where the Palm Beach Road crosses and thence proceed southwesterly across U. S. 1 to an intersection with the east-west road leading to the Palm City bridge. Most of this proposed highway is projected thru undeveloped lands, some inside and some outside the city. For the protection of this right-of-way it would be necessary to request subdividers to recognize its position and routing in the preparation of any land subdivision plats in these affected areas.
13. In the Central section of the city, High School Avenue should be extended around the lake to a connection on the south with Bayou Avenue.
14. In the subdivision of the lands east of Colorado Avenue and along the margins of Poppleton Creek, it would not be amiss to project a parkway from U. S. 1., via Cash Avenue in the Casa Terrace Subdivision to its intersection with the east-west road to the Palm City bridge.



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The critical hazard points in the street system, as previously alluded to, are the various railroad grade crossings. In addition to the usual gate protection it would be advisable to construct or reconstruct all crossings at a 90 degree angle to eliminate all acute angle crossings. As a suggestion, Figure 7 pictures how the Palm Beach Road grade crossing might be treated. After the Flagler Avenue extension along the railroad into the Old Dixie has been completed, the present Old Dixie crossing should be eliminated.

In contemplating the various elements of the Major Street Plan, it must be judged and used as a guide. Its objective is to provide a framework of principal streets that will encourage a better distribution of traffic and at the same time permit of a more uniform land development thruout the corporate area. Some aspects of the plan may seem fantastic or even unreal at this time but it must be remembered that as a whole it is predicated on a city considerably larger than now. The future city and its environs will accomodate many times more people and enterprises than now and as that time approaches the needs of automobile transportation will be greatly accentuated. In only a few years, two to three times more automobiles than now will need circulation channels and parking facilities. To accomodate these increased traffic volumes and to direct their circulation is the principal reason adequacy of right-of-way and roadway widths is proposed. Obviously, the realization of some of the projects may be remote but even in making present plans the suggestions made should be considered.

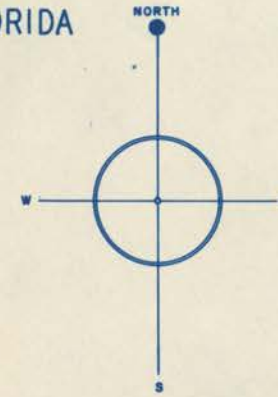
EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT CITY OF STUART FLORIDA

1955

PREPARED BY GEORGE W. SIMONS JR. PLANNING CONSULTANT
JACKSONVILLE FLORIDA

SCALE IN FEET
100 50 0 100 200 300



LEGEND

ON STREET PARKING -	
15-MINUTE SPACES	14
60-MINUTE SPACES	189
TOTAL SPACES	203
NO LIMIT SPACES	
	132
OFF STREET PARKING -	
PRIVATE SPACES:	
CHURCHES	16
CITY HALL	6
RAILROAD	19
FILLING STATION	6
OTHER	11
FREE LOTS	95
TOTAL	183

LOADING ZONE

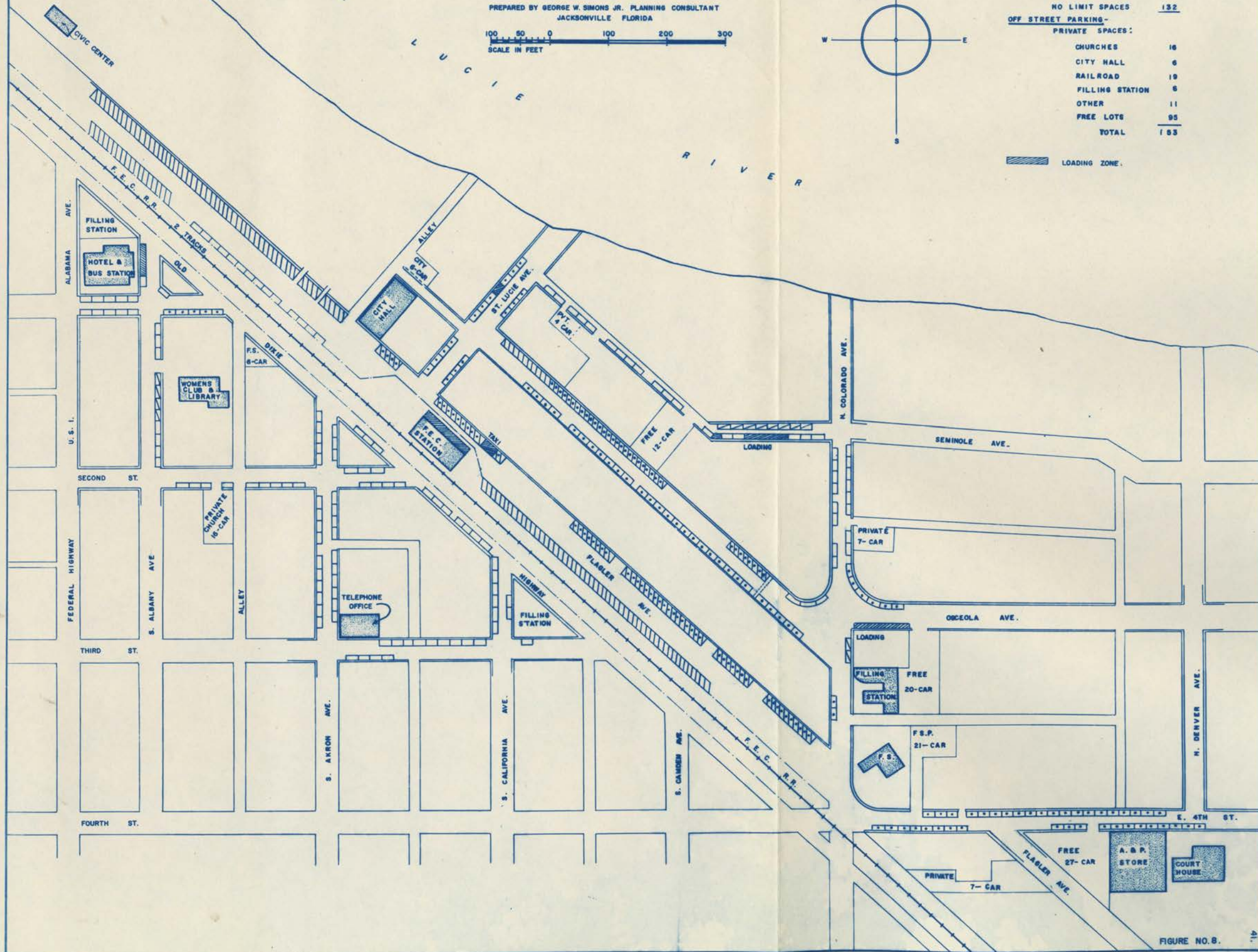


FIGURE NO. 8.

PARKING

Closely associated with the safe and expeditious circulation of traffic is the parking of automobiles, especially within and adjacent to the Central Business District. It is a readily admitted fact that the city of today, regardless of size, must consider ways and means of solving the parking problem. Officials of local government are realizing more and more that the provision of adequate parking facilities contributes substantially to the conservation of land values and the character of enterprises within and adjacent to the Central Business District. Unless parking facilities are anticipated and provided as needed, traffic congestion and poor circulation result and the economic value of the area declines. Recognizing that streets are primarily channels in which to accomodate the flow of traffic, the Council earlier adopted off street parking requirements for the various uses of land, as a part of the comprehensive zoning ordinance.

Figure 8 defines the Central Business District of Stuart. It also shows the extent to which provisions have been made for parking within the area, both curbside and off street.

Altho the Central Business District of Stuart can be said to be located on both sides of the railroad, the most intensively used portion lies on the north side. Not only is it a comparatively compact area but one peculiarly shaped. Because of its shallow depth a number of businesses located in the block between Osceola and Flagler Avenues extend thru the block. The intensity of commercial activity is in this block and on the north side of Osceola Avenue and in the blocks immediately adjacent to the north and south. On the south side of Flagler Avenue is the Florida East Coast Railway

right-of-way. Most of the business south of the tracks is located along the narrow right-of-way of the Old Dixie but to the south thereof the uses blend into residential and other uses.

In the processes of expansion commercial activity has also extended eastward along Fourth Street, from Colorado Avenue and to some extent southward along Colorado Avenue toward U. S. 1.

As the population of Stuart increases and the necessity of further commercial expansion arises in the central district, such expansion can proceed in several directions. The area south of the tracks and the Old Dixie can be improved substantially; business can continue northerly on Flagler Avenue, on Fourth Street and along Colorado Avenue. Then too, one of the most promising areas for future expansion would be that lying between Seminole Avenue and the river (north side of Seminole Avenue) but the effective utilization of this area would result only from a widening of Seminole Avenue. Currently most of these areas are now zoned for commercial development.

Currently, traffic flows in two directions on Flagler Avenue but only from south to north on Osceola Avenue and from north to south on Seminole Avenue.

In comparison with many other small cities the parking problem of Stuart cannot yet be called critical. Most shoppers can readily find parking spaces within a reasonable distance from where they shop. Fortunately Flagler Avenue is sufficiently wide to permit diagonal parking. However it is conceivable that a greater concentration of activity within this central core may give rise to problems of congestion, poor circulation and parking and to forestall such conditions plans should be considered.

The widening of Seminole Avenue as suggested above would be one of the first advisable improvements in the central area. Secondly, the installation of parking meters would accelerate the turn over and make more curb space available to a greater number of motorists. Thirdly, open spaces within or adjacent to the central district could be acquired and converted into parking areas as needed. The latter spaces may not be needed for some time but notwithstanding the lands could be acquired.

One of the most far reaching improvements that could be made in the Central Business District would be the removal of the Florida East Coast depot and express sheds thereby relinquishing to the city an area of considerable size to be beautified and also be used for additional parking. This old structure reminiscent of the pioneer days could be advantageously relocated at some point southwesterly of Colorado Avenue. A new location would permit all trains to clear all crossings at all times. Currently whenever a train of twenty cars stops, two or more crossings are obstructed which in itself contributes to both hazard and congestion.

Additional parking facilities could also be provided in the Waterfront Park recommended in a subsequent section of this report.

Outside the central core as new commercial or other establishments are constructed off street parking facilities shall be provided in accord with the provisions of the zoning ordinance.

The shopping center is fast becoming a reality in cities, a center devoted primarily to the sale of consumer goods and services. The principal feature of these centers is the parking area provided. There are one or two areas in Stuart where such shopping centers may at some time be profitably

established - one easterly of the present city limits and one in the southern section. Their establishment however would depend solely on the rapidity and type of development of the lands tributary to them. In as much as the value and the integrity of the central district is of prime concern to the city, the attention of the Council should be constantly alert to the need of those facilities that will prevent the deterioration of the area as a place in which to conduct business.

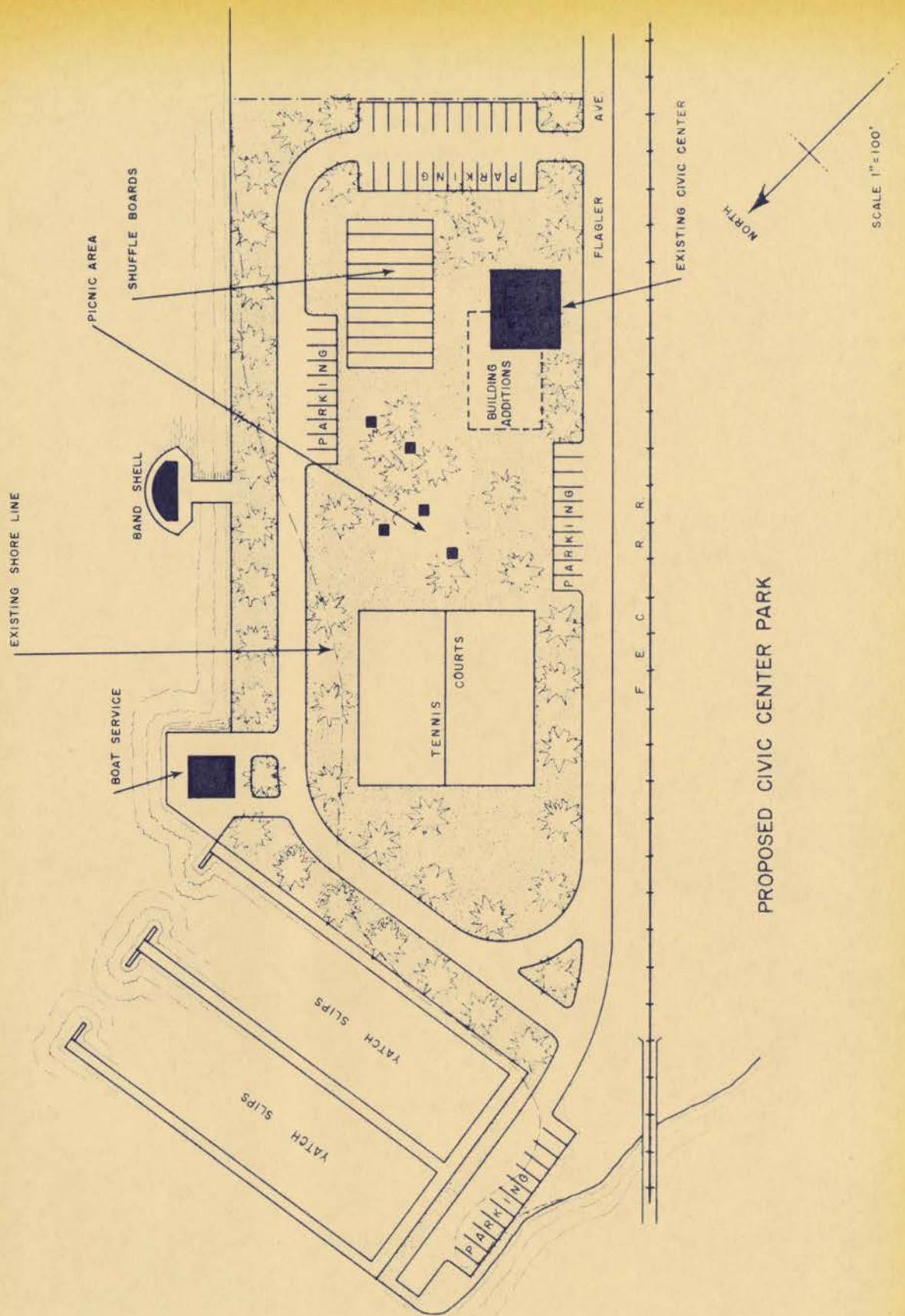
PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and open spaces for diversified recreation are playing an increasingly important role in American urban life. Whereas a generation or more ago the recreational needs of the community were evaluated primarily in terms of children, today they must be gauged in terms of adults as well. Many communities, especially in Florida, are havens for increasing numbers of people who have retired from active pursuits and who are now mindful of both active and passive recreation. These people often select certain locations as homesites because of the recreational opportunities offered. And no where is this more true than in Stuart and its environs.

The geographical location of Stuart on rivers easily accessible to fresh water fishing and the fishing grounds of the ocean is a magnetic attraction to the homeseeker. But in addition to fishing, other facilities must also be included to meet the well rounded requirements of new growth.

In the dynamic city not only should adequately equipped, properly spaced playgrounds and playfields be provided for children and teen-agers but facilities for adults must not be ignored. Among the latter are athletic fields including soft ball diamonds and tennis courts for the more active adult sports and smaller areas for shuffle board, lawn bowling and game shelters. Community or civic structures should also be included wherein group meetings and other functions can be held. And to satisfy the cultural demands of the area an auditorium may also be required.

For its size, Stuart has provided very well to meet the recreational needs of its people - white and colored. As referred to under the section "Land Uses", the large centrally located public park and nearby ball park

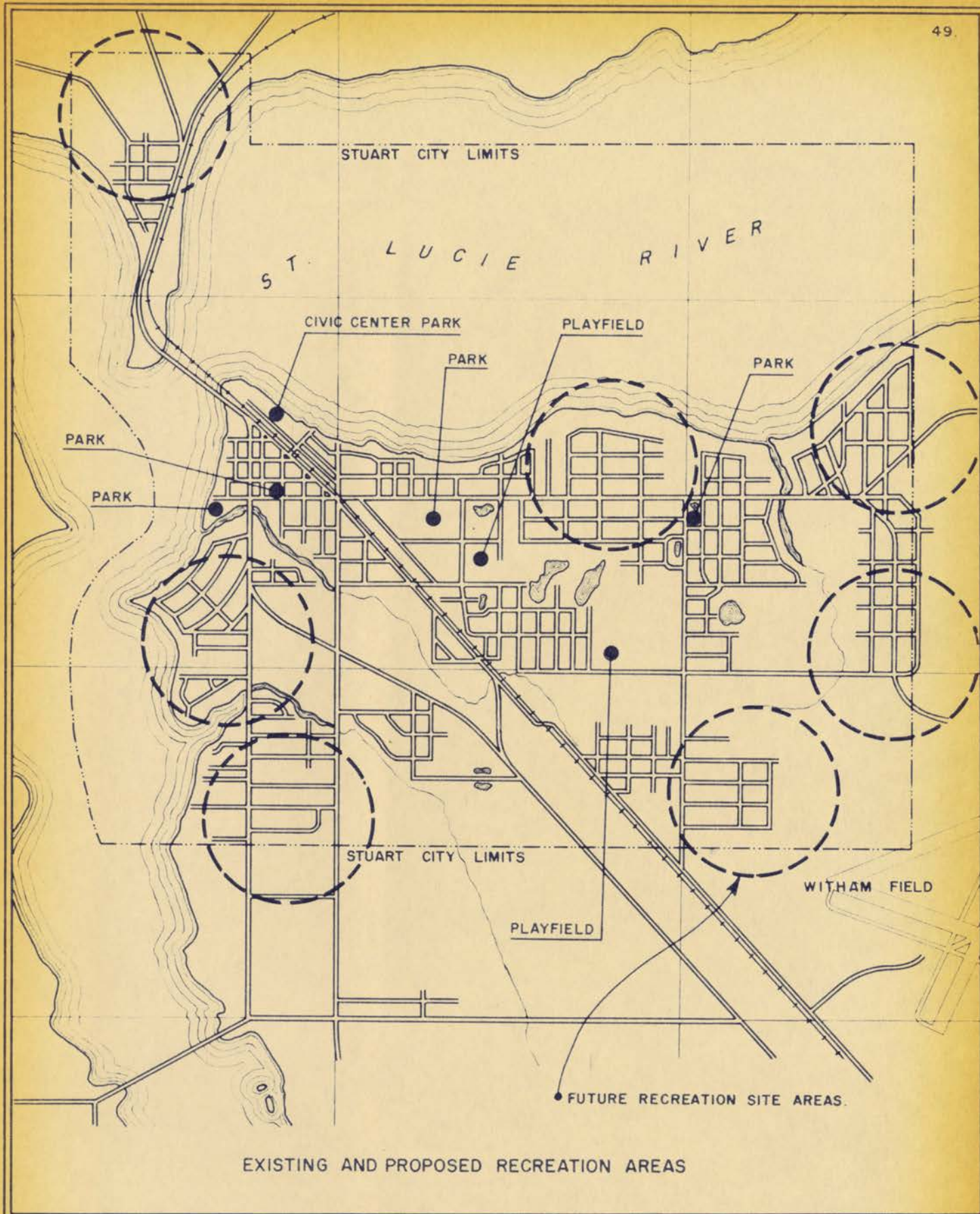


COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STUDY
FOR THE CITY OF
STUART, FLORIDA

serve good and useful purposes. And the Civic Center on Flagler Avenue is a distinctive and creditable community asset. No similar enterprise in Florida fills a greater need to youth than it. The small marina on Frazier Creek and the adjacent park area also serve useful community purposes. In all these respects Stuart has provided well.

Excepting the small area of ground around the Civic Center there is no where on the Saint Lucie River waterfront - the city's front yard - any sizeable park or recreational facility including dockage facilities for yachts and boats passing up and down the Intracoastal Waterway. A spacious park area constructed along the water front near the Central Business District would provide Stuart with a facility comparable in quality and serviceability to Biscayne Park at Miami (Figure 9). Not only would such an area become the center of community life but it would add importance and prestige to the Central Business District. In it could also be provided additional off street parking.

Park and Recreation sites of generous area, adequately equipped to satisfy the many and varied needs of the people of all age groups should be distributed thruout the corporate area as indicated in Figure 10. Neighborhood playgrounds should be established for the younger children; for teenagers and older groups, playfields with community centers and for adults, facilities for passive recreation and cultural enhancement. It is not essential to locate the various facilities on the exact sites indicated in Figure 10; rather, these locations indicate areas generally. A site in the vicinity to serve a given area would serve the purpose.



COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STUDY
FOR THE CITY OF
STUART, FLORIDA

People often believe that the recreation facilities furnished by schools are sufficient, not realizing that many of these facilities are only of a seasonal nature, not always available for general community use. A cooperative undertaking between school and local authorities is highly desirable as it relates to the use of school ground and building facilities. In any community-wide program the school auditoriums can be used for neighborhood or community meetings and events.

The comprehensive plan of recreation areas and parks should be predicated on universally accepted standards adopted to the particular needs of the community. As a general proposition there should be, in the aggregate, at least one acre of land devoted to parks and recreation purposes for each 100 people. On this basis Stuart should have currently in the aggregate at least 40 to 50 acres allocated to park and recreation purposes and at least 100 acres when the city attains a population of 10,000, exclusive of school sites.

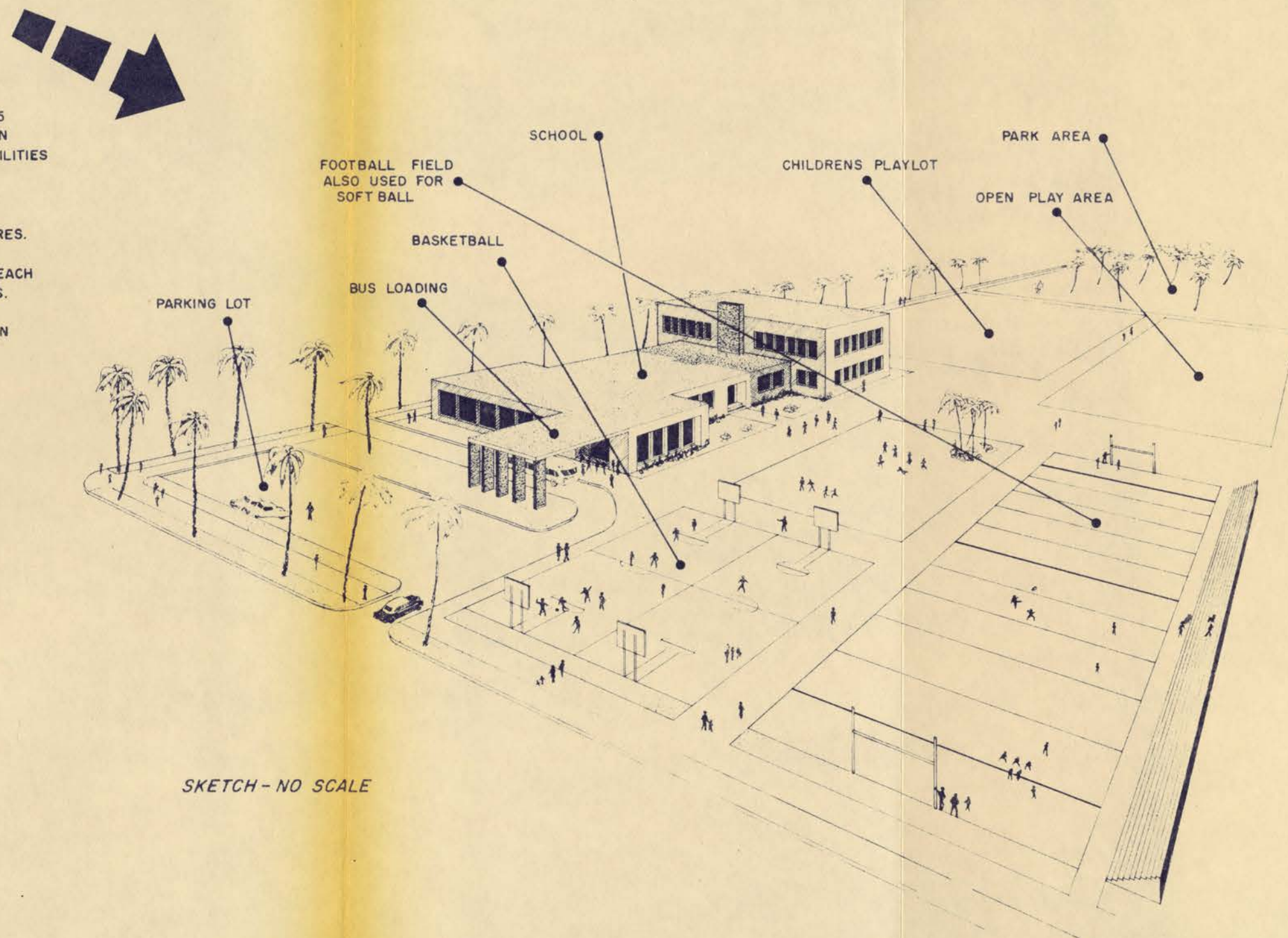
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYGROUND

ADJACENT TO A SCHOOL

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

THE SIZE OF A PLAYGROUND SHOULD BE FROM 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.



SKETCH - NO SCALE

PREPARED BY
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COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STUDY
FOR THE CITY OF
STUART, FLORIDA

RECREATION

FIGURE NO. II.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYFIELD

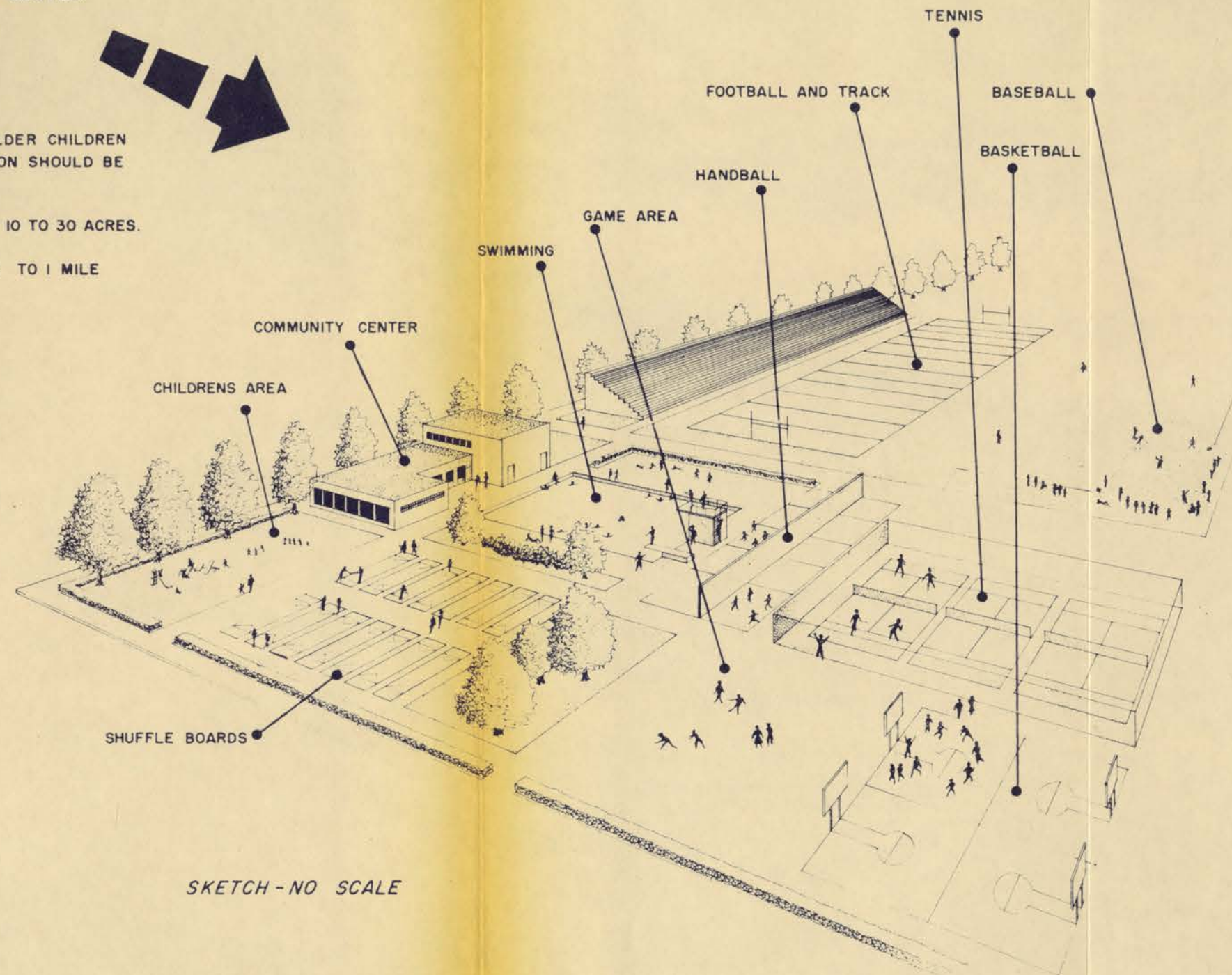
SHOWN ADJACENT TO A COMMUNITY CENTER



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 FROM 10 TO 30 ACRES.

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



SKETCH - NO SCALE

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COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STUDY
FOR THE CITY OF
STUART, FLORIDA

RECREATION

FIGURE NO. 12.

STANDARDS FOR RECREATION AREAS

A Neighborhood Playground should not be less than three acres in area and be located not more than one-quarter to one-half mile from every home served by it - one-quarter mile in densely built up areas and one-half mile under most favorable conditions. When combined with a Neighborhood Park, the area should not be less than five acres. The playground should be located centrally in the neighborhood it serves so that no one will be obliged to cross heavily traveled traffic ways to reach it. It should not be exposed to any special hazards (Figure 11).

The Neighborhood Playground should be attractively designed with a corner for pre-school children, an apparatus area, open spaces for informal play, fields and courts for a variety of games, shaded areas for quiet activities, a wading pool and a small shelter house. Many of such playgrounds are now fenced.

A Playfield should not be less than ten acres in area and be located within one-half to one mile of every home served by it. The Playfield will provide a wider variety of services than the playground and appeal to the older, more active age groups. Generally speaking, the Playfield will serve the needs of the people living in an area served by four Playgrounds (Figure 12).

Among other facilities, the Playfield should contain a children's playground, areas for field sports such as soft ball, an area for tennis courts, an area for lawn bowling and other games, a swimming pool and a building for indoor meetings and games.

LAND SUBDIVISION PRACTICES

From the initial Stypmann plat, Stuart has expanded to its present physical pattern of streets, blocks and lots by a succession of land subdivisions. As shown under the "Land Use" section, the most active developments thru the years have followed the water fronts. And too, as previously shown, development has been influenced to a considerable degree by the various creek courses. There remain however many vacant lots and large land tracts still vacant and undeveloped.

The various subdivisions established north of Seventh Street, east of the railroad have been reasonably well coordinated but in some instances street jogs are noticeable as well as an absence of street continuity. As an illustration, Fifth Street extends eastward from High School Avenue with a right-of-way of 50 feet, to Palm Beach Road but the subdivision to the east thereof failed to provide continuity but instead, created an offset locating Fifth Street to the south, terminating at Alamanda Street. Because of the design of the subdivision east of Palm Beach Road, Seventh Street offers the only possibility of a thru street from U. S. 1 on the west to Park Avenue on the east. The subdividers of the lands north or south of Fourth Street failed to align Indiana Avenue and Amerigo Streets resulting in a jog at Fourth Street. Riverside Avenue and Osceola Street could still be brought into alignment thru a long undeveloped tract north of Fourth Street. There are illustrations elsewhere due primarily to the fact that the subdivider of one tract did not recognize the street system of his neighbor all of which resulted in needless dead end streets or severe jogs in the system.

There are still many sizeable tracts of undeveloped land in the south-east quadrant of the city and also in the area westerly of U. S. 1 that will ultimately respond to subdivision for residential and other uses. When subdivision plats for any of these lands are submitted for approval the City Council should predicate their acceptance of plats on the following minimum criteria.

How does the proposed subdivision fit into the pattern of the neighborhood of which it is a part?

- (a) Where streets of the subdivision are continuations of existing streets are they in alignment?
- (b) Are the street widths of the proposed subdivision the same as or of better proportions than those of the subdivisions adjoining?
- (c) Are the lot areas and their minimum widths in accord with the provisions of the zoning ordinance and do they compare favorably with lots in adjoining subdivisions?
- (d) Are street widths adequate and in accord with recognized practice?
Streets should have a minimum width of 60 feet unless they are short cul-de-sac streets which might be reduced to 50 feet.
- (e) Is the subdivision compatible with the neighborhood of which it is a part?
- (f) In case a component part of the Major Street Plan passes thru a proposed subdivision has the subdivider made ample allowances for it in both width and direction?

By subjecting plats to these bare minima, the Council can better judge plats and reach decisions as to their approval or modification.

Many of the larger undeveloped tracts of land lie in the County adjacent to the city. This is especially true between Park Avenue and Saint Lucie Drive on the east and south of the city between the South Fork and U. S. 1. Because of this condition it is imperative that the City and the County define a cooperative procedure for examining and approving plats. Subdivisions in these areas which lie within the urban area of Stuart should be consistent with other orderly development within the city. A joint committee representative of the City and County could effectively perform this service which is strongly recommended.

To effectively control subdivision design and development and prescribe detailed rules therefor will require special enabling legislation which should be enacted at the 1957 session. Such legislation could give the city control within its urban area altho some of it may lie in the County. Until such legislation is available the procedure suggested above should be followed.

Figure 13 illustrates how much of the area between the railroad and the South Fork could be subdivided into a pleasing pattern.

POSSIBILITIES OF ANNEXATION

The Land Use Map (Figure 4) shows the boundaries of the corporate area of Stuart as now constituted. This map also shows the principal physical features of the area and the distribution of the various land uses - residential, commercial and industrial. It is noteworthy that residential development has followed the margins of the two water frontages, between the Federal Highway and the South Fork and between Fourth Street and the Saint Lucie River. Outside these two marginal strips the greatest quantity of vacant undeveloped land is found. Altho not all parts of the interior vacant lands are desirable for residential development much of it will be subdivided to accomodate the population increase of the future. This is particularly true in the Kreuger Creek area south of Fourth Street and in the Poppleton Creek area south of U. S. 1. The area east of the Palm Beach Road and south of Tenth Street offers possibilities for an extension of the subdivision pattern north of Tenth Street. These various tracts can be subdivided into spacious attractive residential areas.

Some of the most desirable and suitable lands for future development lie easterly of the present city limits, north of the airport. The water frontages in this area have already been subdivided and developed with many high quality dwellings, served by Saint Lucie Drive. Thru the north third of this area the new Fourth Street extension to the Sewell's Point and Hutchinson Island bridge will be constructed, enhancing the development trend that has been in progress in this easterly direction. The fact that this easterly area is now virtually an integral part of the city suggests the feasibility of annexing it to the city thereby enabling the city to guide and control its future orderly development.

The portions of the area between Saint Lucie Drive and the river are currently improved in a most creditable manner and its annexation would assure the property owners along the river that properties between the city limits and the Saint Lucie Drive would be developed according to the highest standards.

The same is true south of the present city limits between Colorado Avenue and the South Fork where subdivisions are being created and new dwellings are being erected. Extension of the limits to include the east-west road on the south leading to the approach to the Palm City bridge would again enable the city to control development into the city. Thru this area the entrance to the city from the Turnpike will be routed. The area south of Poppleton Creek between Colorado Avenue and the South Fork will respond to good residential development.

The annexation of these two areas to the city in the near future would not only extend control to the entire northern portion of the peninsula and most of the water frontages but it would increase the city's responsibilities in the form of services and utilities. In most cities where such expansion programs have been effected, services and utilities have been provided gradually as needed over a period of time. Because of Homestead Exemption, annexation may necessitate a reassessment of properties so that areas absorbed will share in the expense of services rendered, especially fire and police protection, street lights and garbage collection.

The value of belonging to the city and participating in the affairs of government and helping to build a greater and better community is inestimable and far outweigh the added costs. Stuart is not going to remain

static. Its growth is destined to be substantial. To provide adequately and properly for the added increment of people the administrative control of the local government should be extended and thereby assure a wholesome development in contrast to a haphazard one. In unincorporated areas under no direction or control, services and facilities are nil and they exist by virtue of their proximity to the economic base. Such areas frequently never absorb the spirit of the central city and therefore contribute little to it.

AESTHETIC CONTROL

Orderliness, cleanliness and neatness are appreciated by every one. Nothing impresses the highway traveler or visitor more than to find a community that considers these essentials. The shoddy roadside stand with its accumulation of products and glaring signs distracts the passerby, implanting in him the wrong impressions. To maintain orderliness, cleanliness and neatness is purely a job of municipal housekeeping encouraged by the city.

By regulation, if need be, no signs or obstructions other than official directional signs should ever be located within the street right-of-way unless specifically permitted. Some businesses located along such heavily traveled highways as U. S. 1 often seek to vie with each other to present their wares or services and to that end erect signs either next to or on the official right-of-way. Some signs are even traffic hazards. By appealing to the pride of the various enterprises along the highway a greater degree of orderliness can be restored and a pleasing roadside result from the effort. No sign or other display should ever be located nearer than five feet to the right-of-way line.

Streets, particularly in the business centers, often become littered with paper and debris because no receptacles are provided to receive such waste. Receptacles placed at convenient locations on the street or in public park areas will keep much of the litter off the street and ground.

Well groomed parkways and parks with trimmed trees and shrubs will encourage people to take similar steps at their respective homes.

Aesthetics may not contribute too much to the physical pattern of the city but they do present a quality of orderliness and neatness to the visitor and citizen alike. Often a homeseeker may be attracted to a given community because he likes its appearance and the way it is maintained. It is needless for a city to give forth impressions of ugliness and untidiness. Therefore to give the proper impression, municipal house-keeping should be of the highest order.

Stuart has a great scenic potential which should not be marred by the carelessness of some unthinking person or group.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The city acquired and equipped a new City Hall and Central Fire Station within the past year, located on Flagler Avenue just west of Saint Lucie Avenue. This structure will serve the needs of the city for many years. Some day however the need will arise for other public structures - library, auditorium, community centers and fire stations.

As the portions of the city south and east become more densely populated the need for additional fire stations will arise. Currently if a long train was blocking the crossings at the time of a fire alarm from the south side, a serious delay would result. Thought should be given first to the establishment of a fire station on the south side of the tracks. This should be located somewhere on the Federal Highway south of Poppleton Creek where it can serve all the area along the South Fork and those areas developing to the east thereof.

Ultimately a second fire station should be located in the easterly part of the city near Park Avenue so it could be accessible in all directions.

To enhance its cultural life and prepare for a greater city, Stuart should contemplate a new Library structure at an early date. This could be established as either a city institution solely or as a city-county one similar to that at Fort Pierce. The new Library should be centrally located preferably on Fourth Street in the neighborhood of Balboa and Cortez Streets where it is understood a tract is available. This site could be developed with a structure plus off street parking for the use of patrons.

Probable sites for future elementary schools are shown on Figure 13.

SUMMARY

To prepare a plan of development for a new city in this day is a task comparatively easier than preparing one for a city already established and in which major trends of development and growth have been formed. Altho not yet an old city, Stuart has experienced a planless growth and expansion.

After a study of the Stuart area and the plan of physical development that has evolved, one regrets that the pioneers were unable to anticipate the vast technological changes that have been wrought in recent decades, that have influenced city building. Had Stypmann and the other early settlers been able to foresee the future in which Stuart finds itself today, they would doubtless have drawn a town site pattern more commensurate with its requirements. But then, today another era of growth and expansion lies ahead for which plans should be made.

With a knowledge of what has already been done and what should be anticipated for the future, the job of the officials will be to prepare for the future in a manner to accomodate the increased population and the needed facilities so that a well balanced, wholesome community will result.

The route of the railroad thru Stuart has been and still is one of the major barriers toward the accomplishment of an ideal site plan. The town grew up around the railroad so one of the main objectives now will be to minimize the effects of the railroad in future planning. Then too, the head waters of the three creeks with their low marginal areas have deterred development of interior portions. The new routing of U. S. 1 thru the city has also influenced the utilization of lands along and adjacent to it.

Naturally the water front properties have appealed to home builders thru the years so much of the residential development has followed these courses.

The Stuart metropolitan area will continue to grow and develop but as it improves and becomes more intensively settled the population of Stuart will increase but the extent of development within the city will depend on how effectively the lands are subdivided and provided with streets and other community facilities. Much of the future development in the immediate Stuart area will tend to occupy lands now unincorporated lying east, south and north of the city. And to give the city some control of these areas their incorporation into the city would be a major consideration. In these areas lie most of the land adaptable to subdivision expansion. Then too, the control of the Fourth Street extension eastward would be most desirable.

To facilitate the movement and distribution of traffic thruout the area, especially in a way to protect the value and character of neighborhood areas, the component elements of the Major Street Plan and General Land Use Plan should serve as guides. The principal objective of the street plan is to give service to all sections of the area.

Parks and playgrounds are important provisions in every residential neighborhood. They should be situated so as to serve the greatest number of people with a minimum amount of walking or riding. Because of Stuart's appeal for recreation, the city should enlarge and construct an adequate waterfront park. This improvement will contribute immeasurably to the popularity of Stuart as a recreation center. Such a facility adjacent to the Civic Center will be an added attraction.

The principal provisions for commercial expansion are in the area west of Colorado Avenue and adjacent thereto. An improvement in this area will be helpful in balancing the commercial activity on both sides of the track. A large part of this area is now devoted to a Trailer Park which will probably continue and this naturally minimizes the amount of land that can be used commercially.

Other major projects north of the tracks will be the removal of the depot and the widening of Seminole Avenue. These two accomplishments will contribute greatly to traffic circulation and parking. And the widening of U. S. 1 south will also be helpful.

If and when the area east of the present city limits is incorporated into the city, provisions should be made in the easterly area for a Shopping Center adequate to serve the needs of the people in the area. And likewise a Shopping Center should be provided in the south portion of the city in the vicinity of the Palm River bridge.

To stimulate an interest in Planning among the people generally and to make Planning a continuous function of local government, the Commission should appoint a City Planning Board composed of five or seven civic minded citizens. Such a Board would devote their thoughts to the various problems of the city that affect growth and from their studies, assist the Commission to carry out any worthwhile plans. A Board of this kind would be very helpful as an advisory body.

