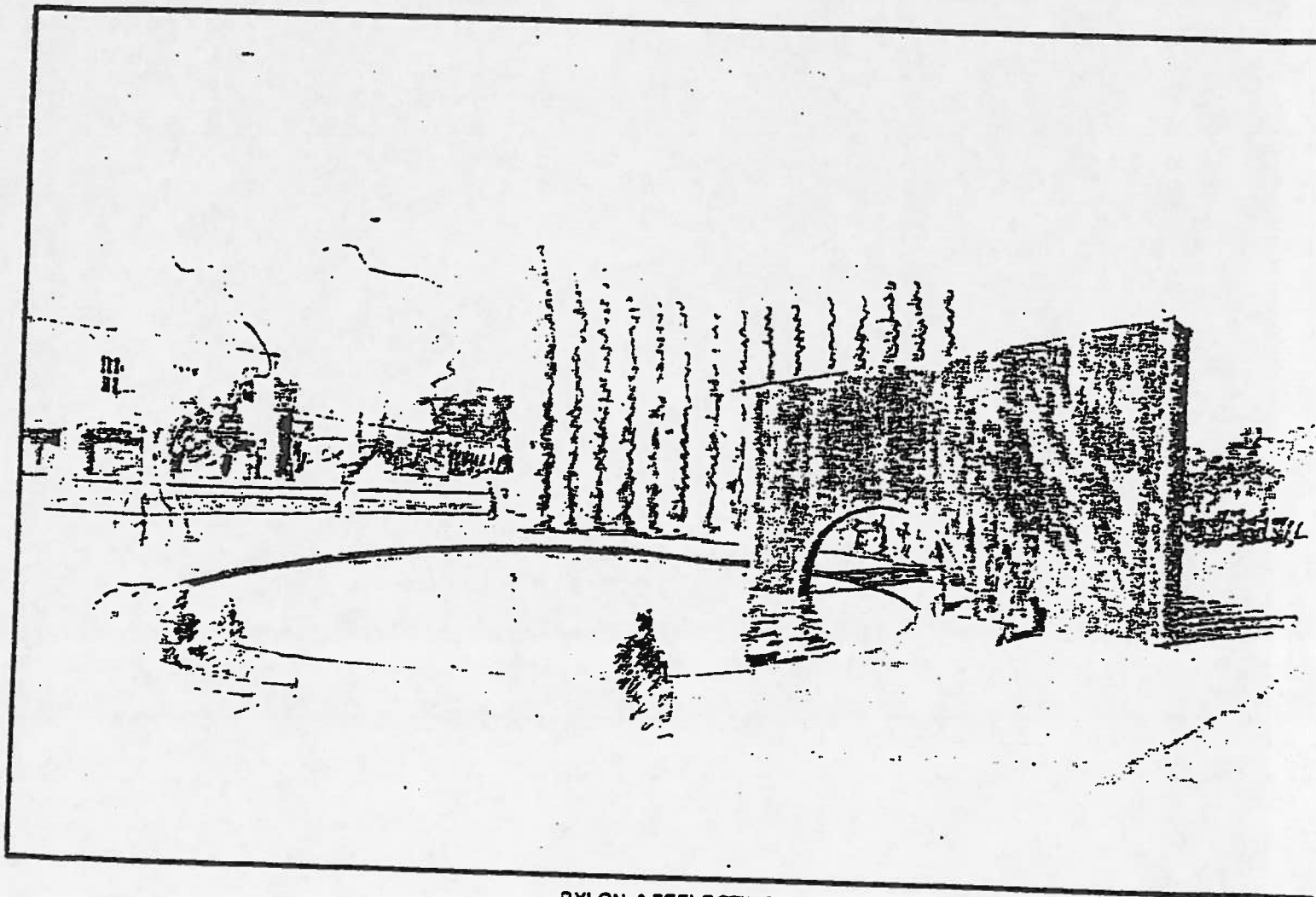


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Soldiers & Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan



PYLON & REFLECTING POOL - LOCKING EAST IN SOLDIERS & SAILORS PARK
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Economic Development Department • City of Albuquerque

July 22, 1985

SOLDIERS AND SAILORS PARK METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

PART 1: AREA, HISTORY, PLANS, AND FINANCIAL TOOLS

I. METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

As established by the Albuquerque City Council on _____, 1985, the Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area includes commercially zoned properties on either side of Central Avenue between 10th Street and Laguna Boulevard and three lots on 14th Street zoned SU-2 for Townhouse uses.

The designated area includes the following properties:

All of blocks 50, 56, 57, 58, 59 and 68 of the Original Townsite of the City of Albuquerque;

Lots 35 through 44, block 16; lots 19 through 21, block 17; and all of block 19 of the Perea Addition;

Lots 1, 8, and 9, block 1 of the Huning Castle Addition;

Lots A, B, and C of the Huning Place Addition;

Lots 1 through 5 of the West End Addition;

Tracts 92, 93, 345, 346a, 346b, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, and 394a as shown on Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District map 38.

According to New Mexico's Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, municipalities may establish Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas for slum or blighted areas; this designation allows the City to use special powers - eminent domain, tax increment financing, and the financing of projects with Metropolitan Redevelopment Bonds are the most important - to remove blight and improve conditions in the area.

This plan describes the techniques and standards the City will use in encouraging redevelopment of the Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

This Metropolitan Redevelopment Area has been designated between 10th Street and Laguna to respond in a timely way to a major development opportunity, a project planned for the 14th and Central area.

II. HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The stretch of West Central Avenue which makes up the Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area includes long strips of one-time farming land once watered by the Acequia Madre of Albuquerque, blocks

which were part of the City's original townsite (platted in 1880) and part of the Huning Castle Addition, the Country Club area developed in the 1920's. West Central in this area has formed the connection between Old Albuquerque and New Town (the City boundary for many years was at 15th Street), and now serves both as boundary and connecting point for the residential neighborhoods to the north and south.

The area is rich in historic resources, although its finest building, Huning Castle, was demolished in 1955 (the Castle was sited on the vacant land south of Central on the west side of 15th). On the north side of Central, several properties are included in the Fourth Ward Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Fourth Ward District, the prime residential area of Albuquerque from about 1910 to 1925, has fine examples of Queen Anne, Prairie School, and Bungalow styles. As part of the Downtown Neighborhoods Area, Fourth Ward has become a showcase of effective historic preservation and neighborhood revitalization.

On the south side of Central, the Washington Apartments, built in 1916 at 10th and Central, have been placed on the National Register. The Weiller House at 1228 Central, one of the remaining bungalows in what was once called "Honeymoon Row," is listed on the New Mexico Cultural Properties Register. The 1924 Castle Apartments, at 15th and Central, are probably eligible for National Register listing. Bungalows and two Queen Anne style houses obscured by modern additions recall the area's long history.

Central Avenue in this area has historically related both to downtown and to the neighborhoods. Motels, fast food establishments, and offices connect to the downtown and to Central's long commercial strip, while a number of service businesses, apartments, and homes serve the neighborhood populations. In spite of its considerable historic character, the area now lacks a strong identity; vacant buildings and marginal commercial uses (including an adult book store) are common, and large stretches of vacant land interrupt the streetscape, contributing to a sense of deterioration.

The Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area has great potential for improved neighborhood-oriented retail and services, for new residential development, and for attractive office use connected to the downtown. Public support for private ventures that can change the image of the area is essential to revitalizing its character.

III. PLANS AND STUDIES

A. SECTOR PLANS. The north side of Central in the Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area is governed by the policies of the Downtown Neighborhoods Area Sector Development Plan, adopted in 1976. Goals of the Plan include elimination of blight and expansion and improvement of community services. The Plan established SU-2 (Special Neighborhood Zone) zoning with specific use categories for each area. The area along Central is zoned predominantly SU-2/Community Commercial, which closely follows the C-2 zone of the Comprehensive Zoning Code. The area includes a block zoned for Residential-Commercial use, and lots zoned for Townhouses.

The south side of Central in the area is governed by the Huning Castle and Reynolds Addition Sector Development Plan, adopted in 1981. Plan objectives include evaluation of development on Central Avenue to encourage mixed use and neighborhood oriented development and implementation of an economic development strategy for commercial areas along Central Avenue. This Plan also established SU-2 zoning: the area at the west end of the Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (see map) is zoned SU-2/Commercial and/or Low Density Apartments (allows R-2 residential and many C-1 commercial uses), while the area to the east has SU-2/Neighborhood Commercial Residential zoning (allows R-3 and C-1 uses).

B. R/UDAT CENTRAL AVENUE STUDY. In November, 1984, a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team sponsored by Albuquerque chapter of the American Institute of Architects made proposals based on a study of Central Avenue. Their highly praised report has led to formation of the Central Avenue Corridor Corporation, and to a focusing of City actions on Central Avenue revitalization. This plan should be viewed as forwarding and implementing the R/UDAT recommendations for the Soldiers and Sailors Park area of West Central. The general concepts of the R/UDAT Central Avenue Study and the particular recommendations for this area of Central are included with this Plan. In the Soldiers and Sailors Park area, the Study recommended a "portal" element at 14th and Central, relocation of utility lines on the south side of Central, and a street tree program.

IV. AVAILABLE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FINANCING TOOLS

A variety of financing tools are available for private redevelopment and for public-private development partnerships in the Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

A. METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES. There are three basic Metropolitan Redevelopment Area powers - Tax Increment financing, eminent domain, and provision of Metropolitan Redevelopment Bonds - which could be used in the Soldiers and Sailors Park MRA.

1. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING creates a development fund based on increased property taxes paid by new development in a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. This program is only useful when an area can expect large new developments which are not exempt from property taxes (as Metropolitan Redevelopment Bond projects are). In the Soldiers and Sailors Park MR Area, where there is little likelihood of large-scale, non-bond-financed development which could contribute to such a fund, this is not an applicable technique.
2. EMINENT DOMAIN. Under the Metropolitan Redevelopment code, the City may use eminent domain powers (powers to purchase land through condemnation) in MR areas. Under most circumstances, this power should not be used in the Soldiers and Sailors Park MR Area. The sole exception would be a case where a development opportunity of unusual merit which meets the goals and design criteria of this Plan can only be realized through City assistance with land acquisition.
3. METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AND MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING BONDS. Metropolitan Redevelopment Bonds will be made available to developers

in the MR Area in accordance with the land use goals and design criteria established in this Plan. In Metropolitan Redevelopment bond projects, a developer requests that the City issue bonds for a specific, detailed project. After review in public hearings by the Albuquerque Development Commission and the City Council, bonds may be issued for projects which conform to general and area-specific criteria. These bonds involve no direct funding by the City and no pledge of the City's credit, but, because they are tax-exempt, they allow the developer to achieve a lower-than-market interest rate on project financing. MR bond projects also benefit from a 7-year exemption from property taxes.

Metropolitan Redevelopment Bonds can be used for office, retail, residential, and manufacturing projects, among others. Bond projects are analyzed according to criteria established by the Albuquerque Development Commission and City Council, which require evaluation of land use, design, economic benefits, and feasibility. Multi-Family Housing Bonds for residential projects have a special requirement in the federal tax code: projects using them must rent 20% of their units to low or moderate income tenants. There are also special criteria for housing bonds in the City bond policy, designed to insure that bond financed projects provide needed low-income housing and do not-compete unfairly with other housing. Bonds are useful only for fairly large projects; with project budgets of less than approximately \$500,000, the legal and brokerage costs of issuing bonds will offset the interest rate advantage.

For information about bond projects, contact the Economic Development Department, 766-5083.

B. OTHER DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

1. **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT LOAN POOL.** The Downtown Development Loan Pool, funded by Community Development Block Grant monies, offers a principal subsidy to write down the costs of small-scale renovation and rehabilitation of commercial facilities. Subsidies may be granted for renovation loan amounts of up to \$300,000. This program, administered by Albuquerque Center, Inc., is available for properties in the downtown core, in the Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, and in other areas near the downtown. The Loan Fund is particularly useful for upgrading small properties. Call Albuquerque Center, Inc., 843-9486, for information about this program.
2. **INVESTMENT TAX CREDITS** are available for substantial rehabilitations of buildings over 30 years old and buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Fifteen percent of the costs of rehabilitating buildings over 30 years old can be taken as a tax credit, 20% on buildings over 40 years old; many buildings within the Soldiers and Sailors Park MRA qualify. For these credits the building must be in commercial use, and 75% of the exterior walls must remain after the rehabilitation. For buildings on the National Register (or contributing in a National Register Historic District), a 25% credit is available for both commercial and rental residential properties if the rehabilitation follows National Park Service

- guidelines: For all ITC projects, the rehabilitation costs must be greater than the adjusted basis in the building. Call the Economic Development Department, 766-4720, for details.
3. NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES offers assistance in the design, construction, and financing of housing rehabilitation projects for the Downtown Neighborhoods Area on the north side of Central Avenue. NHS staff will assist homeowners in designing and carrying out a rehabilitation; the program, funded by Community Development Block Grant monies and by local lending institutions, also has a low-interest loan program for owners who cannot qualify for private financing. Call NHS at 243-5511 for details.

PART 2: SOLDIERS AND SAILORS PARK METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

I. GOALS

The overall goal for the Soldiers and Sailors Park Metropolitan Redevelopment Area is redevelopment of the Area as a vital commercial and residential area which serves the neighborhoods on either side, while establishing the character of this portion of West Central Avenue as an attractive and appropriate entrance to the downtown core.

The following objectives, proposed to guide private and public sector activities in reaching the goal, complement objectives of the Downtown Neighborhoods Area Sector Development Plan, the Huning Castle and Reynolds Addition Sector Development Plan, and the R/UDAT Central Avenue Study.

- A. A mixture of land uses, with an emphasis on neighborhood retail, service commercial, and residential uses, is desired. Small-scale office developments contribute to the area, but should not become the predominant use.
- B. Projects shall be designed to enhance the distinctive character of Central Avenue in this area as a historic roadway, entry to the downtown, and connector between vital neighborhoods.
- C. Commercial activities shall be contained within the appropriate zones along Central Avenue and shall be designed to minimize traffic and parking problems in the residential neighborhoods to either side.
- D. The City shall cooperate with private sector redevelopment activities through programs for the improvement of Soldiers and Sailors Park and Central Avenue.

II. LAND USE

A. ZONING. While zoning categories on the two sides of Central are somewhat different, they are compatible in allowing a desirable mixture of commercial, office, and residential uses (residential development is a conditional use in the SU-2/CC zone on the north side of Central, and a permissive use in the zones on the south side). Therefore, no changes in zoning are recommended. Property owners in the SU-2/CC zone are encouraged to apply for conditional use permits for residential development.

B. RECOMMENDED USE PATTERNS. While a variety of uses are possible within area zoning, Metropolitan Redevelopment Bond financing should be available only for projects which make a special contribution to the neighborhood and to the Central Avenue streetscape. Desired developments include:

- a. mixed use development (combinations of neighborhood-oriented retail, neighborhood-oriented service, residential, restaurant, and office);

- b. residential development for apartments, condominiums, and townhouses; and
- c. neighborhood-oriented retail or service businesses as a single use.

Bond financing will not be made available for projects with more than 75% office uses.

The rehabilitation and recycling of older apartment buildings and motels for modern apartments or elderly housing is especially appropriate for bond financing. Our Lady's Manor, at 1023 Central N.W., is an excellent example of the potential for such recycling, and should be further praised for its fine landscaping.

III CIRCULATION AND PARKING

The only streets providing through traffic across Central in the area are 10th and 14th Streets, which are zoned and developed with residential uses to the north and south of Central. These through streets serve an important function, but as the area redevelops and if traffic flows increase, the City shall use appropriate techniques to slow through traffic and minimize neighborhood impacts.

Providing parking for redevelopment has been a major problem in this and other older areas of Central Avenue. In spite of a number of vacant or underused lots, it has been difficult for developers to purchase or locate adequate parking to serve new uses of older properties. In this area the two requests within the last year to change zoning from residential to support parking use point out the seriousness and prevalence of this issue. The City shall study parking policies for older commercial strips in the redeveloping urban area to identify possible solutions. For mixed use projects, a "shared parking" approach, which allows less than code parking requirements because the different uses will have their peak parking needs at different times of day, should be considered. The City shall also assist developers of desirable projects in locating needed off-street parking.

Use of any land within the area as a surface parking unrelated to particular developments within the area is strongly discouraged.

IV. CITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The City will contribute to neighborhood revitalization through a redesign of Soldiers and Sailors Park at 14th and Central which will function as a "portal" element and provide a sense of place for this portion of Central. The redesign will be coordinated with the major development planned for the 14th and Central area, and the Arts Board will be approached to provide park arts works through the 1% for the Arts program. As part of this redesign, the City proposes to close 13th Street between Tijeras and Central and develop approximately 15 metered parking spaces in this area to assure that parking overflows do not affect neighborhood streets. Redesign of the park by the City's Parks and Recreation Department will be completed within a year.

The City will plan and implement a street tree and sidewalk improvement program which will address the relocation of utility lines from the south side of Central Avenue to rear property lines. Possible sources for funding include the Capital Improvements Program and the Urban Enhancement Trust Fund. Private sector contributions for this program will be sought.

V. PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Major private sector contributions to area revitalization will be rehabilitation and redevelopment projects. These projects and the entire revitalization process cannot succeed, however, without the active support of neighbors, property owners, and businesses in the area.

The three neighborhood associations in this area - the Downtown Neighborhoods Association, the Huning Castle Neighborhood Association, and the newly formed Reynolds Addition Association - should publicize new and existing Central Avenue businesses to their members, and urge the use of Central as a neighborhood shopping street. The land use concept of this plan can only be effective with neighborhood support.

Property owners should seek development opportunities for their properties. Staff in the Economic Development Department and Albuquerque Center, Inc. will assist owners in assessing opportunities and funding sources. Owners are urged to keep their properties free of weeds and litter, and to repair deteriorated fencing.

Formation of a Business Association for this area, which should also include businesses to the west of the Soldiers and Sailors Park MRA, is strongly urged. Such an association could coordinate business promotions, identify market needs for new businesses, form cooperative programs to promote appropriate store design, and deal with crime and vandalism problems.

VI. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The undeveloped parcels between 15th Street and Laguna Boulevard on the south side of Central comprise a key opportunity site appropriate for public-private cooperation due to the significant amount of developable land fronting along Central Avenue, its location at the entrance to the Huning Castle neighborhood Addition, and the potential for a synergistic relationship with the 14th and Central project. Metropolitan Redevelopment bond projects on these parcels should conform to the following performance standards to ensure that the special concerns of the City are met if City assistance is involved.

1. Development shall serve to enhance neighborhood character and quality. The following elements will be reviewed to ensure that this objective is met: land use, traffic impact, urban design.

- a.- Land uses shall strengthen and reinforce the Huning Castle neighborhood. A unique mixture of uses that includes retail and quality residential would be considered optimal in meeting this objective.

- b. New development shall create an attractive street facade which is compatible with pedestrian activity. The scale and design should complement existing adjacent development, and should relate to and reinforce amenities which give the area a special identity, including Laguna Boulevard, the 14th and Central project, and the outstanding architectural merit of the Huning Castle Addition. Pedestrian connections to the neighborhood should be provided for any commercial uses which serve the neighborhood.
 - c. Additional traffic generated by the development shall not increase traffic through the Huning Castle Addition.
2. The project shall conform to principles stated in the R/UDAT report relating to Central Avenue. It should establish a positive relationship to Old Town and should complement the 14th and Central project to create an activity node in this area.

VII. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Because of the development of this stretch of West Central over many decades, the building stock along the street is exceptionally varied, including apartment buildings, 1950's motels, storefront commercial buildings set flush to the sidewalk, and bungalows and Queen Anne houses. The visual interest created by this variety should be preserved, but should also be brought into a more unified total pattern through a comprehensive street design program.

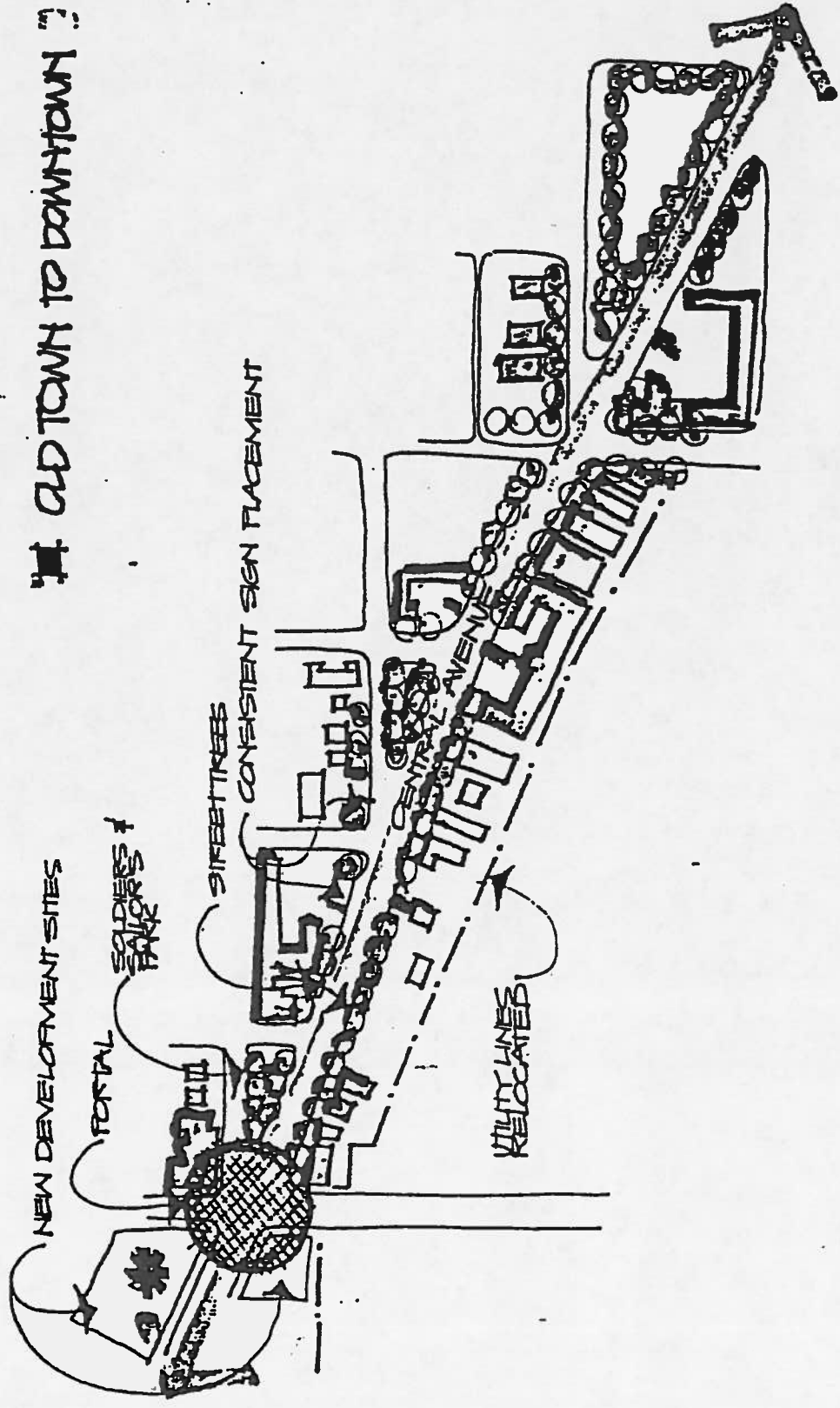
The following design guidelines shall govern all projects funded through Metropolitan Redevelopment Bonds. They are strongly suggested as guidelines for all other development within the area.

1. In mixed-use projects, retail and service-commercial uses should be placed closest to Central Avenue, office and residential uses on second floors, or to the rear of the property.
2. Parking should be placed to the side or rear of developments whenever possible. In rehabilitations of properties with existing parking to the front of the building, or in side parking lots with street frontage, parking lots should be separated from the sidewalk by a minimum distance of 5 feet and should be screened from view by low walls (generally 3 feet in height) and by landscaping.
3. The diversity of building stock and setback in this area of Central Avenue is a positive element; this diversity and the historic character of buildings should be respected and retained when possible in rehabilitations.
4. The design of fencing, trash enclosures, and accessory site buildings and elements should be compatible with the architecture of main buildings, and use a similar palette of materials. Chain link fencing is inappropriate to the character of the area, and shall not be used in rehabilitations.

5. The siting and orientation of buildings should enhance the pedestrian nature of Central Avenue. In new construction, buildings bordering Central Avenue shall be built to the Central Avenue property line whenever possible, and the Central Avenue facade shall be predominantly visually open (more area in windows and doors than walls) and/or shall provide arcades, portals, or awnings at the building front.
6. The main signage area should be the building facade, with signs placed above storefront windows when possible. Sign regulations for the O-1 zone should be used in the Area.
7. London Plane trees (*Platanus acerifolia*) should be the dominant street tree to continue the pattern established in downtown Central Avenue.

VIII. DESIGN REVIEW

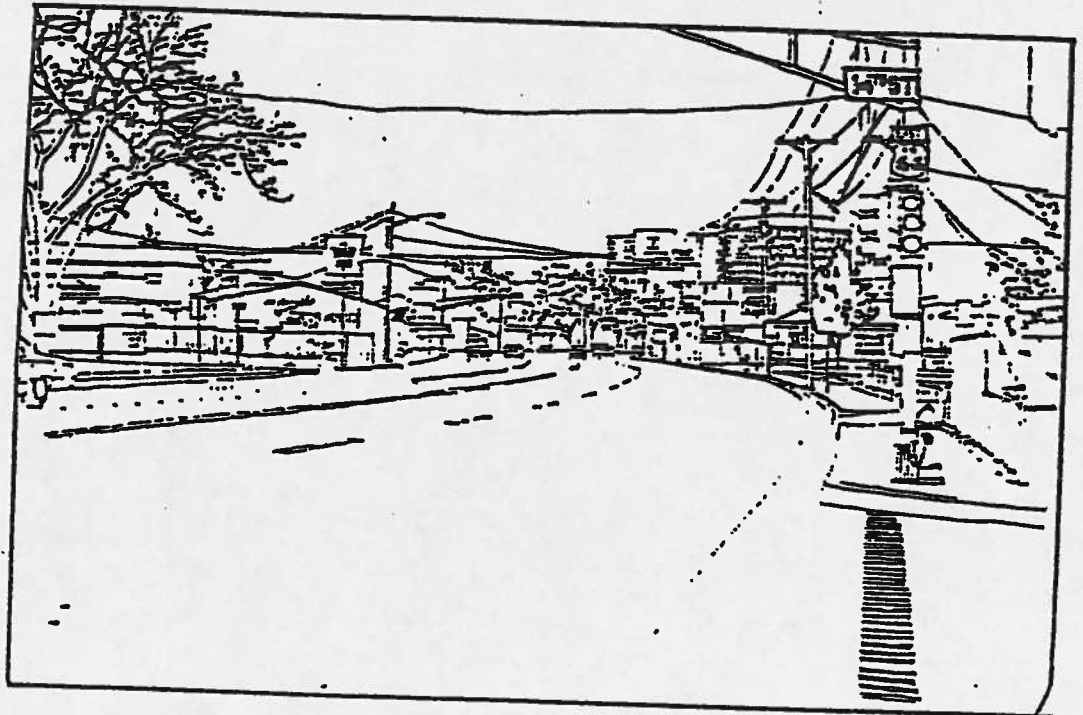
Site Development Plans for Metropolitan Redevelopment Bond projects shall be reviewed by Economic Development Department staff. In cases involving significant changes to site use and density or significant traffic impacts, EDD staff will request review and comment from the Development Review Board. Appeal of EDD staff decisions on site plan review is to the Environmental Planning Commission.



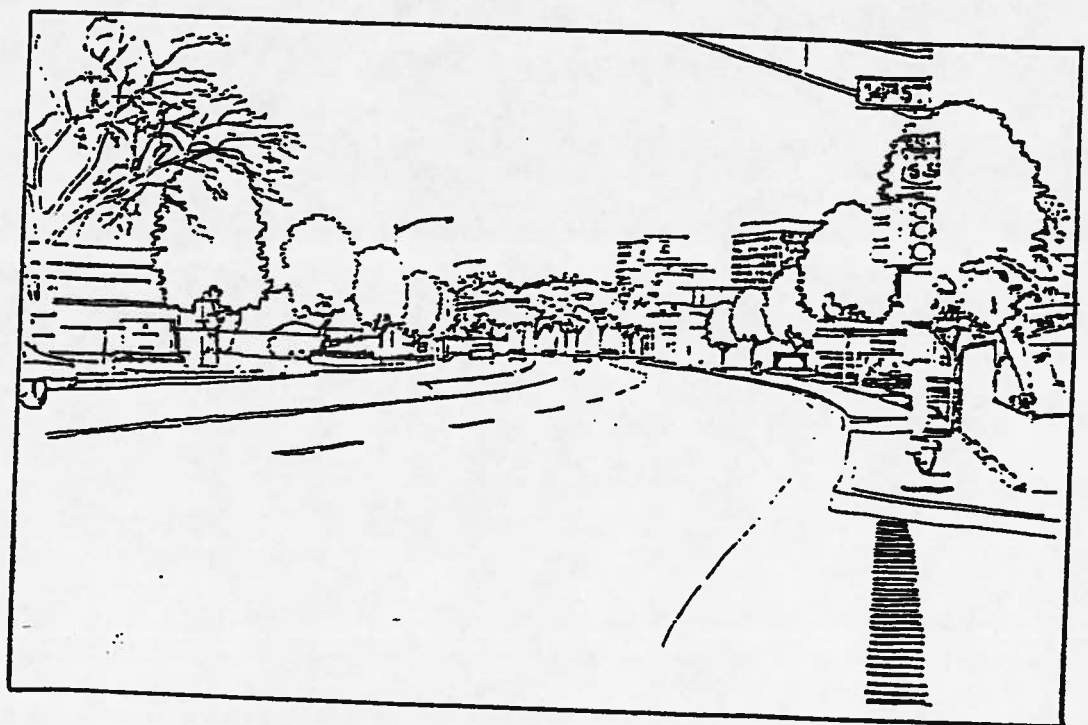
OLD TOWN TO DOWNTOWN

DESIGN CONCEPT
 -FROM THE R/UDAT CENTRAL AVENUE STUDY

LANDSCAPE / STREETScape CONCEPT



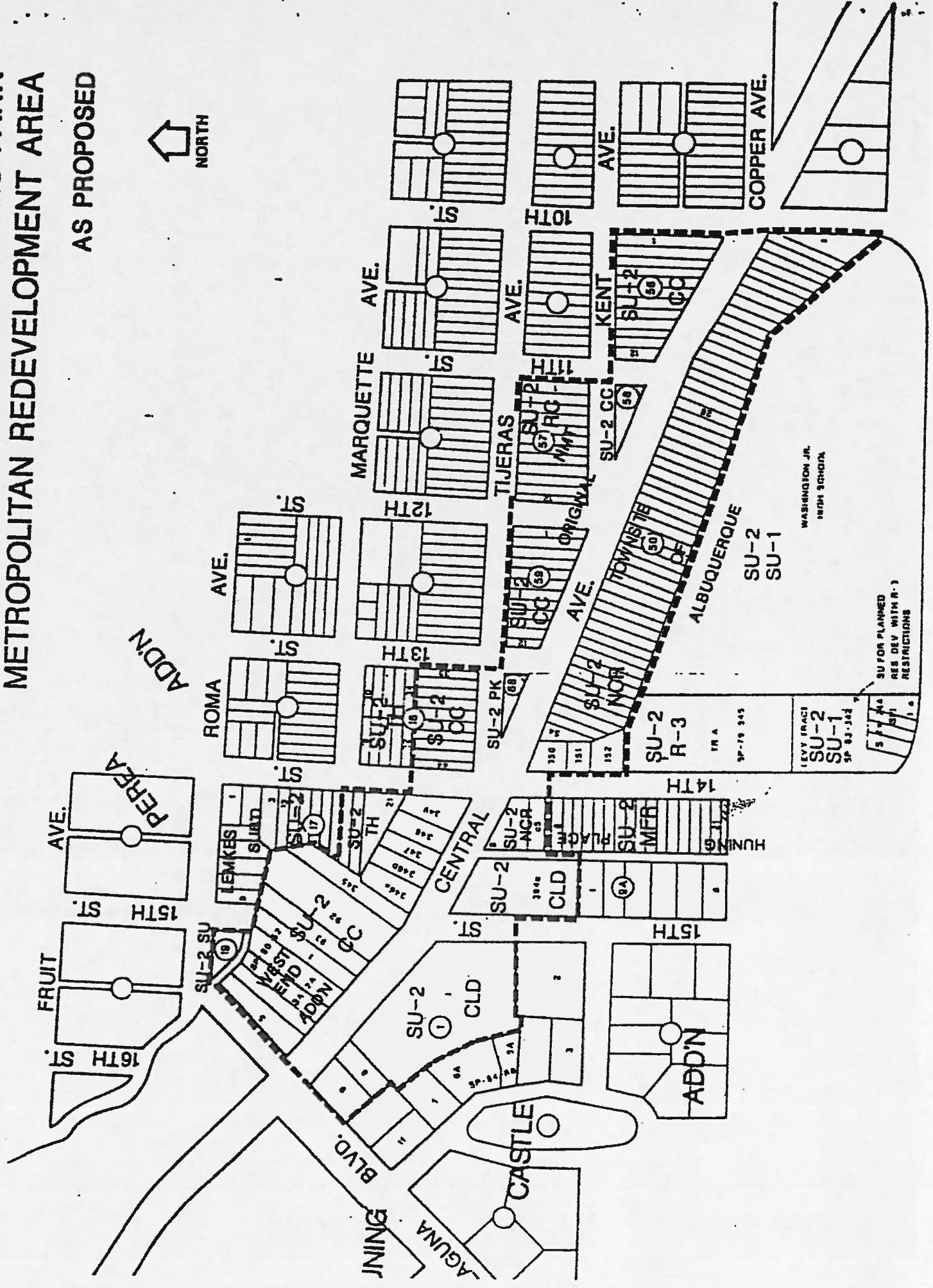
AS IS



AFTER STREET TREE & SIDEWALK PROGRAM

SOLDIERS & SAILORS PARK METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

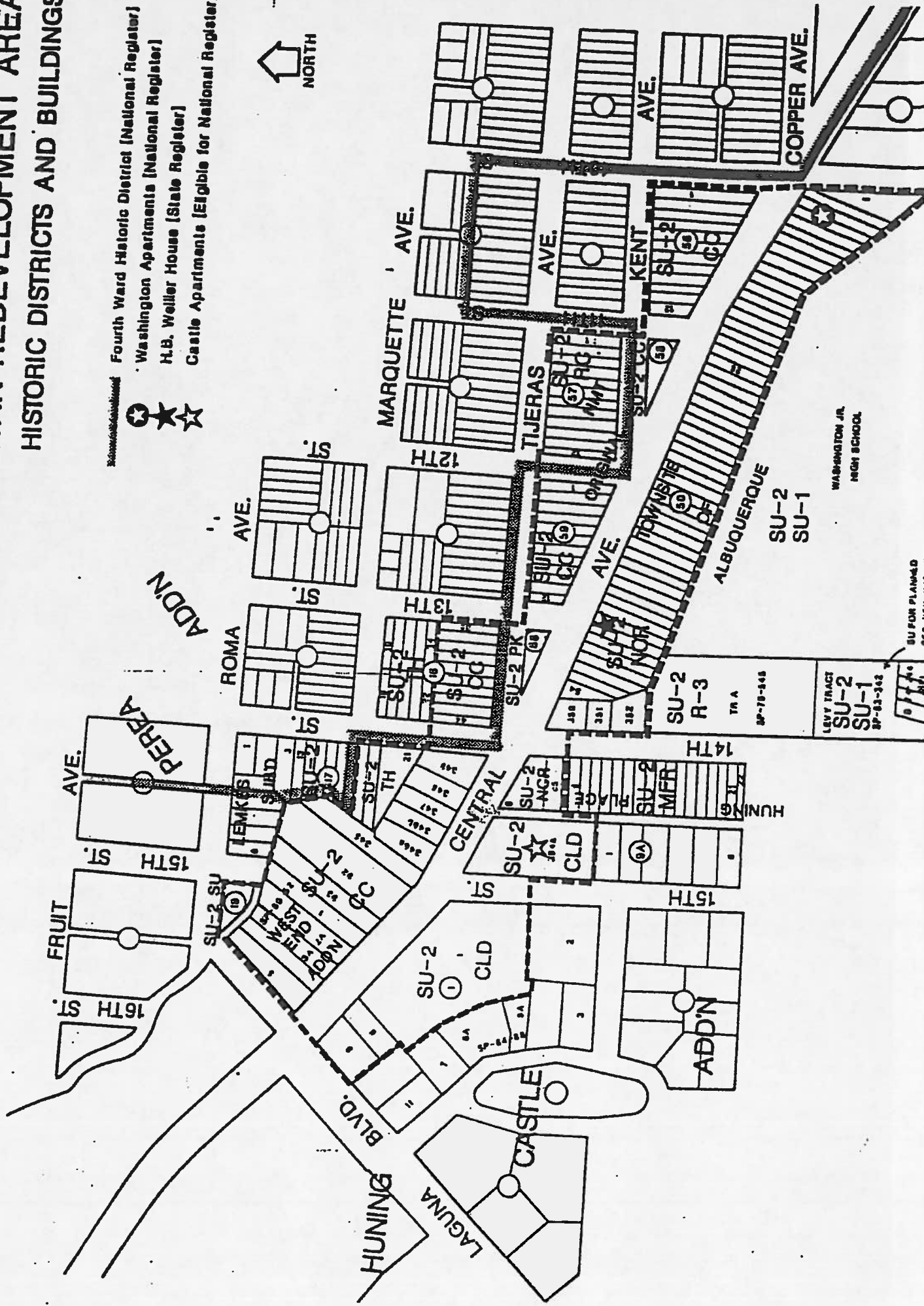
AS PROPOSED



SOLDIERS & SAILORS PARK METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND BUILDINGS



Fourth Ward Historic District (National Register)
Washington Apartments (National Register)
H.B. Weiler House (State Register)
Castle Apartments (Eligible for National Register)



WASHINGTON JR.
HIGH SCHOOL

SU-2
SU-1

SU-2
R-3
TR A
AP-78-145

LEVY TRACT
SU-2
SU-1
AP-63-342

SU FOR PLANNED
RES USE WITHIN...

