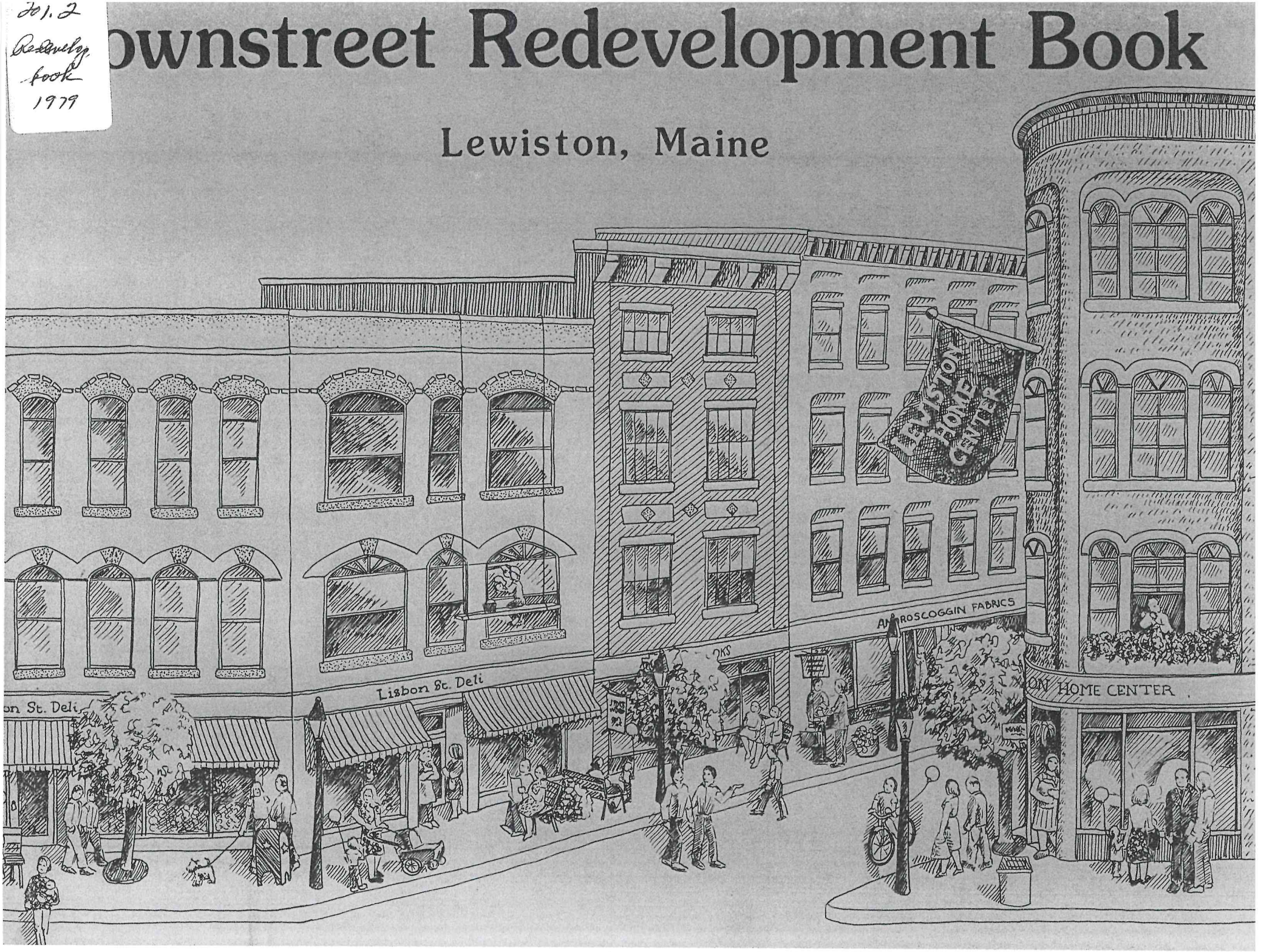
Vol. 2
Redevelop
book
1979

# ownstreet Redevelopment Book

## Lewiston, Maine



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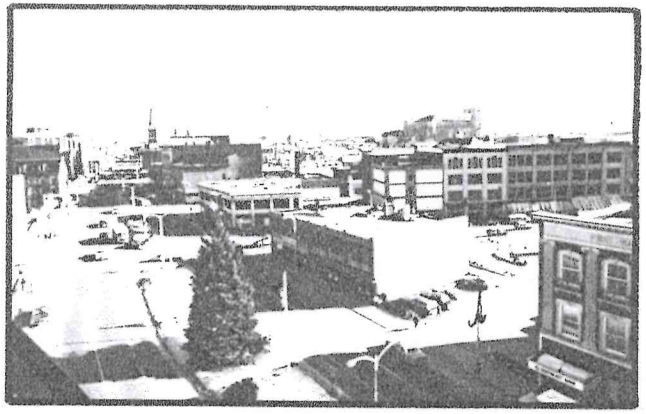
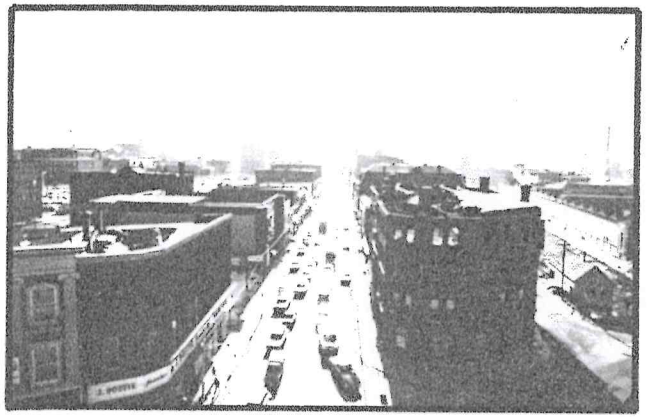
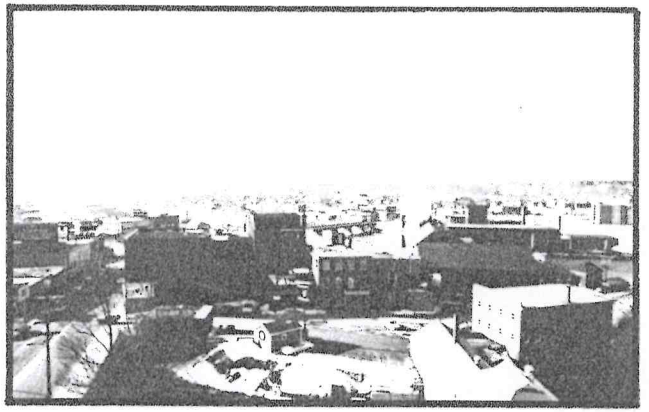




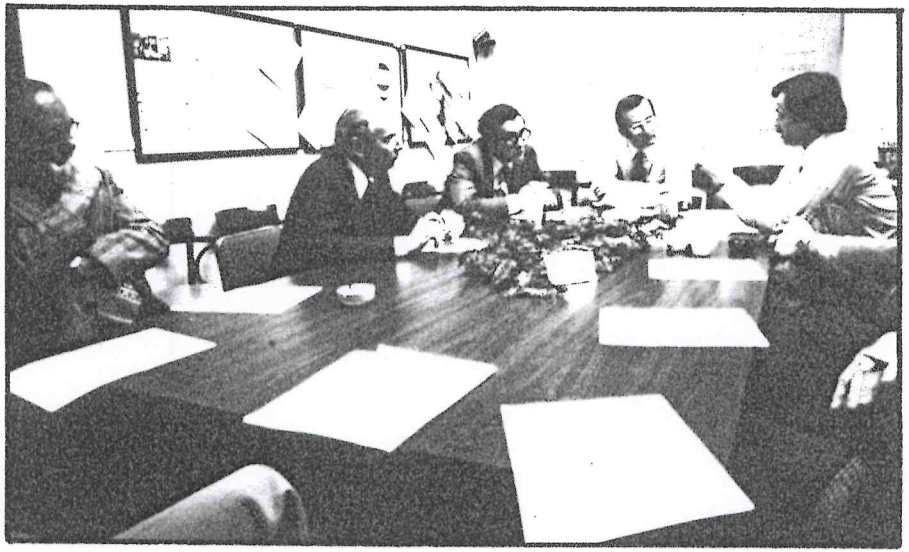


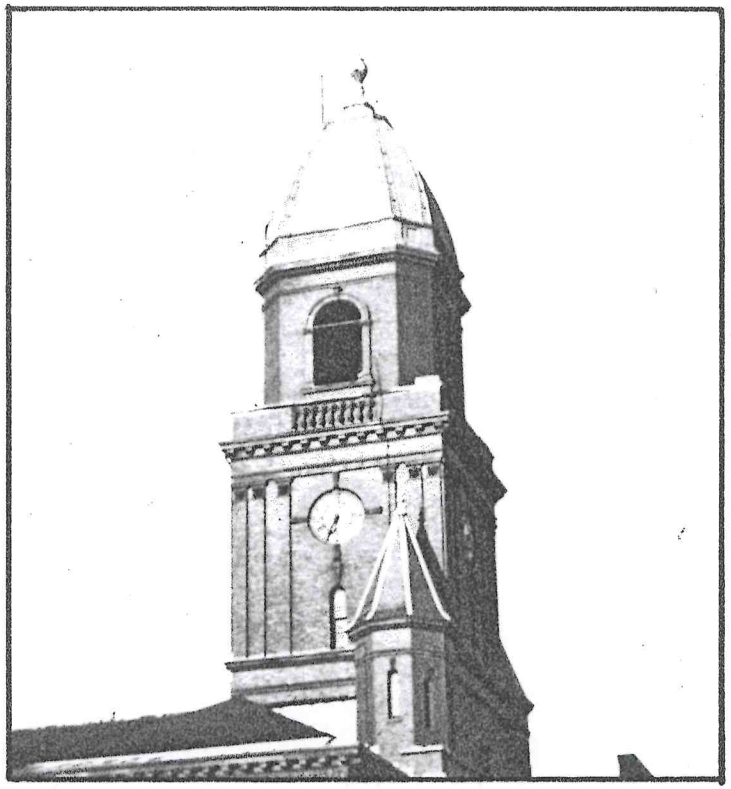
# People & The Process

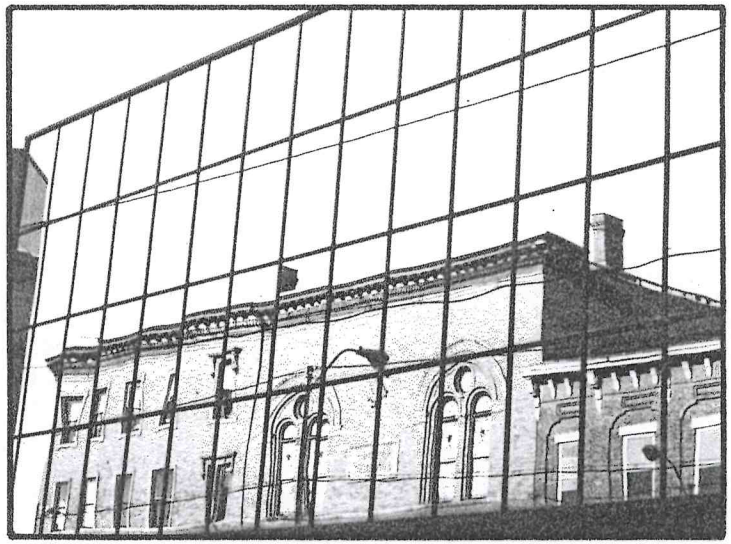
# LEWISTON TOMORROW

For decades, downtown Lewiston has been in steady physical and economic decline. But by the spring of 1977, it was clear that LEWISTON TOMORROW was an idea whose time had come. Despite the growing recession and shrinking role in the local economy, the business community had at last joined hands with lending institutions and city government in a serious commitment to the future of downtown. Within a matter of weeks, local merchants and property owners had pledged nearly $50,000 to hire staff and open an office. By fall, with the aid of CETA funds and a grant from the Maine Council for the Humanities and Public Policy, LEWISTON TOMORROW was fully operational and ready to begin the actual planning process.

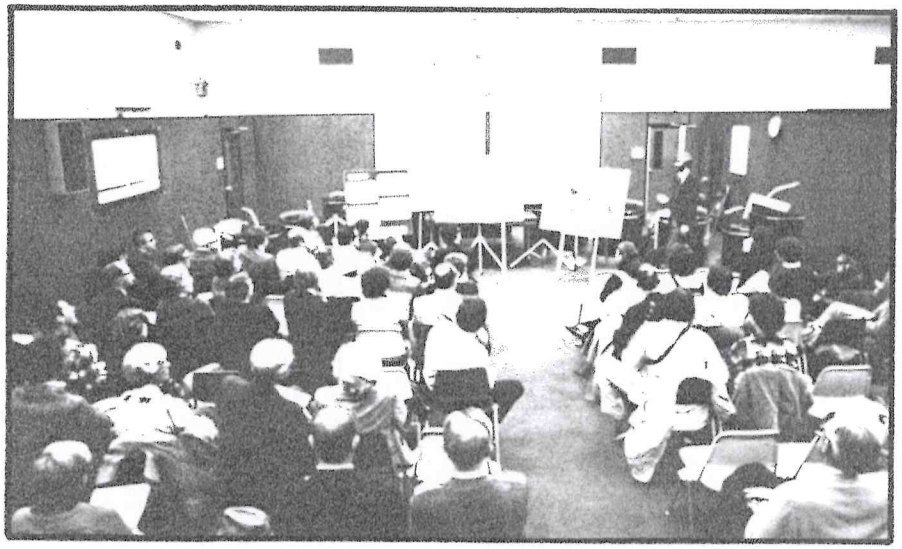
That process provided an organizational framework within which issues could be analyzed and ideas supplied. Committees were formed to study specific problems: transportation and parking, pedestrian amenities, buildings, and implementation. Workshops and walking tours then gave participants a firsthand look at the possibilities. By the following spring, with additional funding from an Economic Development Administration discretionary grant awarded by Governor James Longley, LEWISTON TOMORROW had assembled the major components for a comprehensive redevelopment plan.





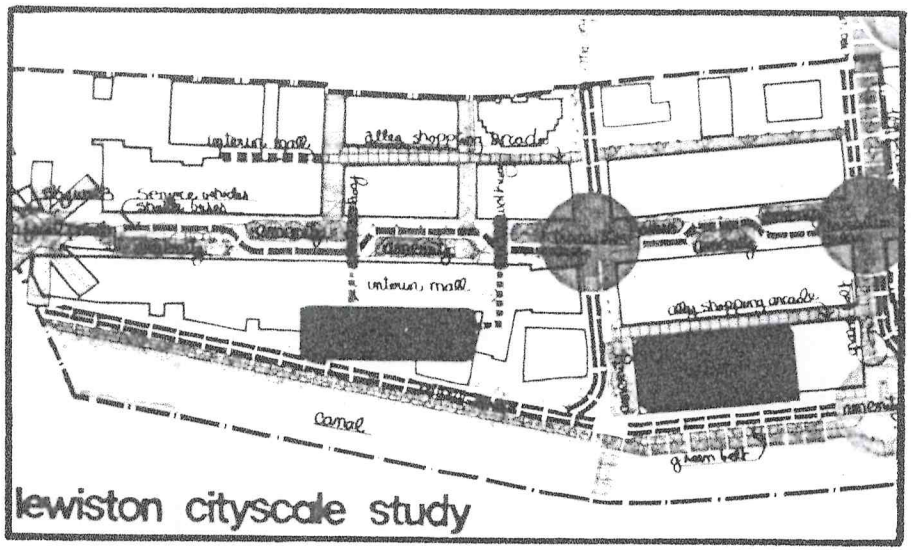


# Cityscale



While the various committees of LEWISTON TOMORROW were engaged in an intensive study of special topics, the City was doing its part to boost general public interest in downtown revitalization. With a $20,000 matching grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Planning Department hired three architectural firms to illustrate ways in which downtown could be redesigned on a more human scale. In a series of four evening workshops, capacity crowds gathered to exchange ideas with the professionals and to criticize their proposals. The results included a set of plans that became part of the City's successful UDAG application. In the months ahead, these drawings will serve as valuable resource materials for preparation of actual working documents.

The phenomenal success of the Cityscale project was proof, if that was needed, of the broad public support for major improvements downtown. More important, Cityscale demonstrated that the public and private sectors could work together, in partnership, to make redevelopment a reality.

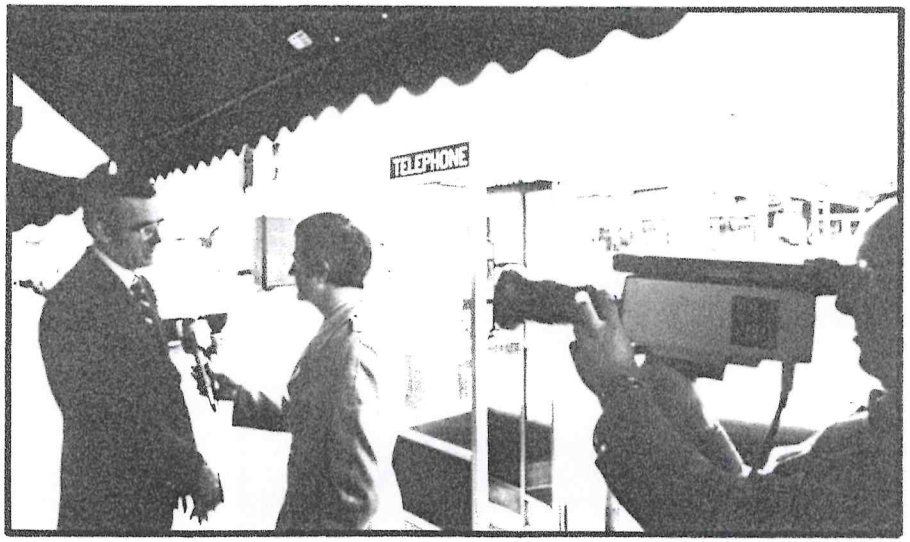


# On the Road

Like Lewiston, other older cities around the Northeast have begun to recognize the importance of downtowns. Some, like Salem, Newburyport, and Boston, have either completed, or are actively involved in, major redevelopment projects. To benefit from their experience, LEWISTON TOMORROW sponsored two guided tours during the winter and spring of 1978. The first, to the Massachusetts cities of Newburyport, Salem, Lawrence and Boston's Quincy Market, included some forty local citizens and public officials. Later, another thirty toured the Canadian cities of Sherbrooke and Quebec. At each stop on the itinerary, Lewiston visitors met with local officials, planners, and merchants and observed firsthand what had been accomplished there. They returned to Lewiston with new ideas and a fresh perspective on the potential for redevelopment at home.

At about the same time, a smaller contingent flew to Washington, D.C. to present Lewiston's plans to various government agencies. Federal officials there were so impressed that the Department of Housing and Urban Development began referring to Lewiston's as one of the most promising projects of its kind anywhere.

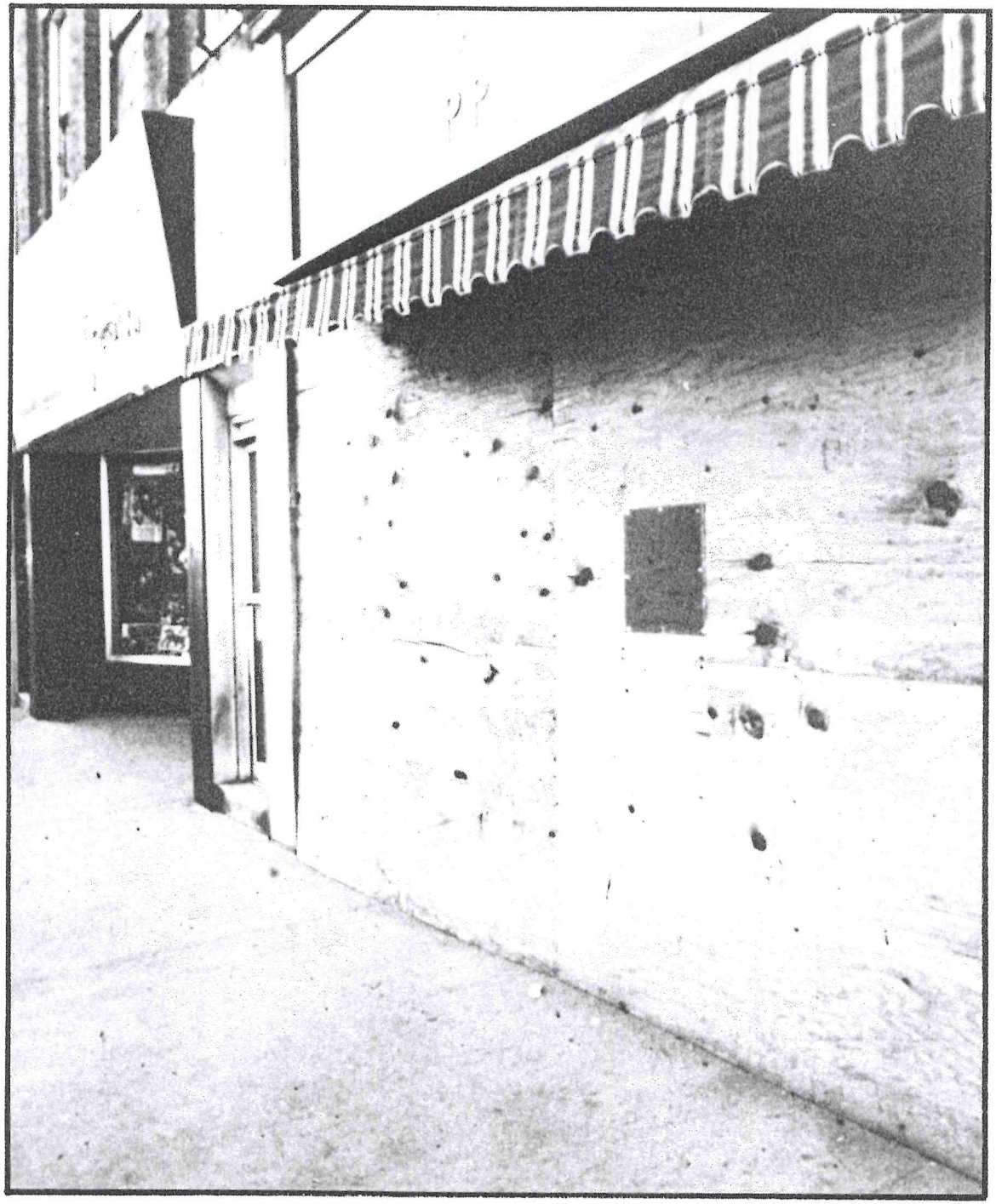
# In the News



The NEWSLETTER of
LEWISTON TOMORROW INCORPORATED
169 LISBON STREET LEWISTON MAINE 04240 207 784 3611
NO. 3
FEBRUARY 1978
VOL I
It's Unanimous!
Lewiston Gets Behind UDAG

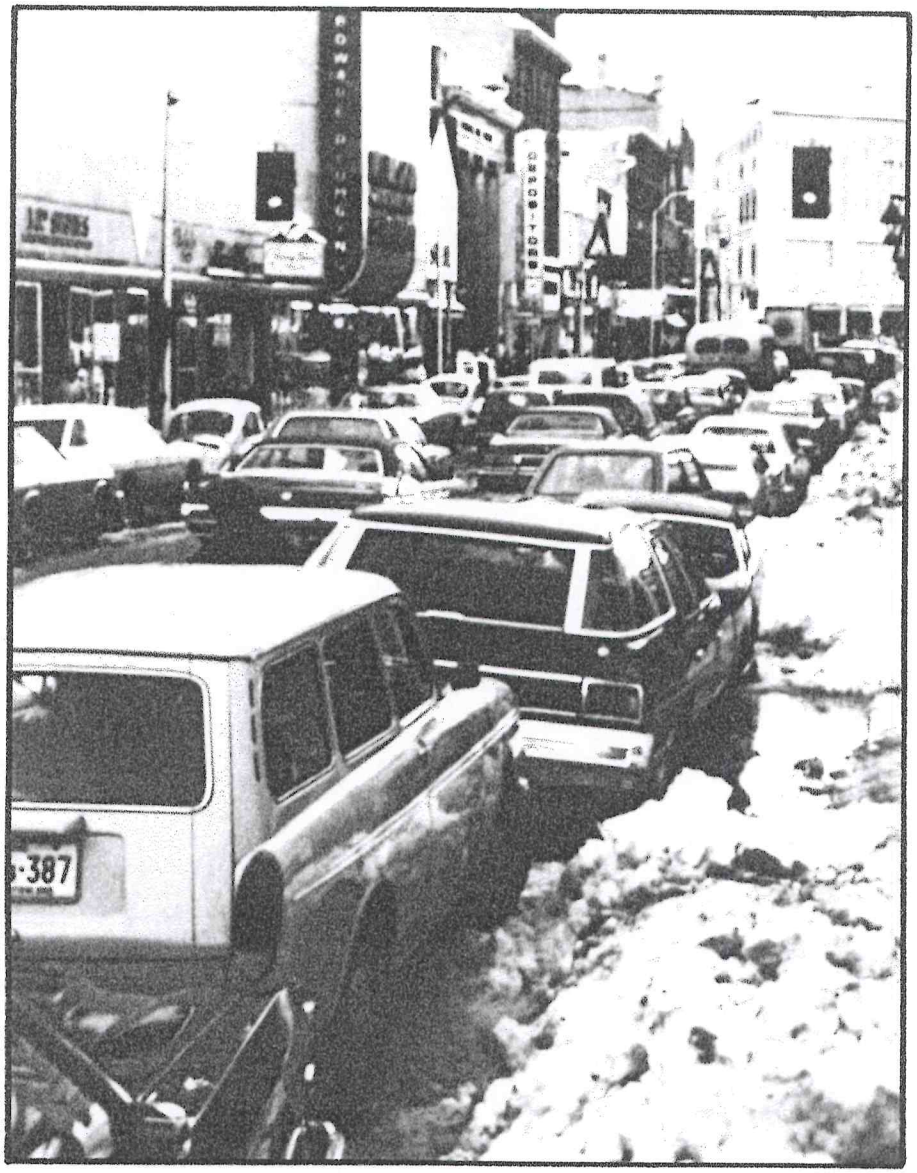
Downtown revitalization is good news for the Lewiston area and for the local media, the redevelopment project has made excellent copy. Lewiston is especially fortunate in having a press that not only reports the facts but genuinely cares about the future of the community that it serves. The "Lewiston Daily Sun" and the "Lewiston Evening Journal" in fact continue to maintain their offices and press downtown and have joined with other local businesses in declaring their commitment to improve facilities. Local radio and television have also given full coverage to developments as they unfold. LEWISTON TOMORROW itself, with support from the Maine Council for the Humanities and Public Policy and the Economic Development Administration, has helped to keep the public informed with its own provocative newsletter, published periodically.

Lewiston Officials Tour Quebec for Downtown Ideas
Parking Garage Site Okayed By Lewiston Task Force
Downtown loan pool now lending..
Lewiston Tomorrow Suggested as Loan Program Operator
Brilliant, New Future Proposed For Burned-Out Masonic Building
Elevator, Program Could Be Key to Downtown
Now a theater 'Downstreet'
Downtown Lewiston To Be 'Born Again'
College Block may soon play key role in downtown development — again
Aldermen Approve Funding Application for Downtown
Peck's Not Leaving Downtown Lewiston
Lewiston Officials To Look at Four Cities' Downtowns
Skywalks, Parks, Fountains Featured in Downtown Blueprints



# Problems & The Plan

# Transportation & Parking

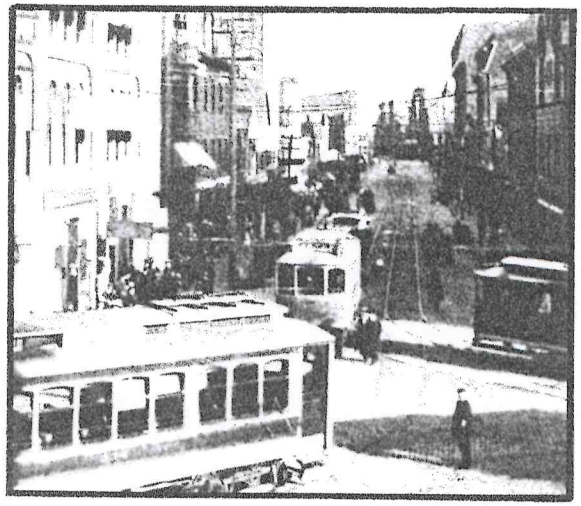


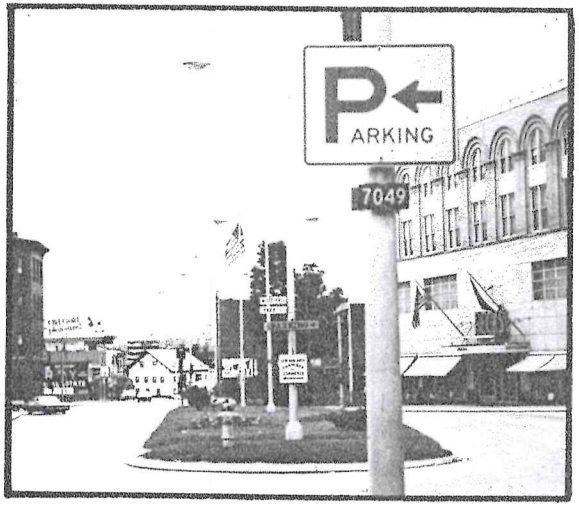
By nearly all accounts, traffic and parking represent the number one problem in downtown Lewiston today. A survey by Bates College students found that merchants and consumers alike view inadequate parking as a major obstacle to shopping convenience. Periodic vehicle counts by transportation planners reveal that traffic congestion may be slowly choking the life out of downtown. The State Bureau of Air Quality Control has even cited automobile exhaust in downtown Lewiston as a public health hazard.

The Transportation and Parking Committee of LEWISTON TOMORROW set out in the fall of 1977 to examine these problems and to reconcile the inevitability of the private automobile with a downtown designed primarily for people. The Committee's conclusions are summarized below:

## Problems

- Traffic congestion and delays on Lisbon Street
- "Bottleneck" at Main and Lisbon Streets intersection
- Localized auto pollution
- Misallocation of parking spaces
- Poor access to existing parking
- Lack of convenient bus routes, stops, and shelters
- Inadequate space for bicycle and moped traffic





# The Plan

SHORT-RANGE

- Eliminate through traffic on Lisbon Street
- Remove some on-street parking and replace with unloading zones
- Synchronize traffic signalization
- Strictly enforce parking and delivery ordinances
- Provide additional off-street parking facilities on Canal Street with direct access to Lisbon Street
- Study mass transit rerouting and install bus shelters and bus stop signs
- Consider two-wheeled traffic needs in future transportation planning

LONG-RANGE

- Reconstruct and widen Canal Street to allow two-way traffic
- Provide additional off-street parking facilities on Park Street

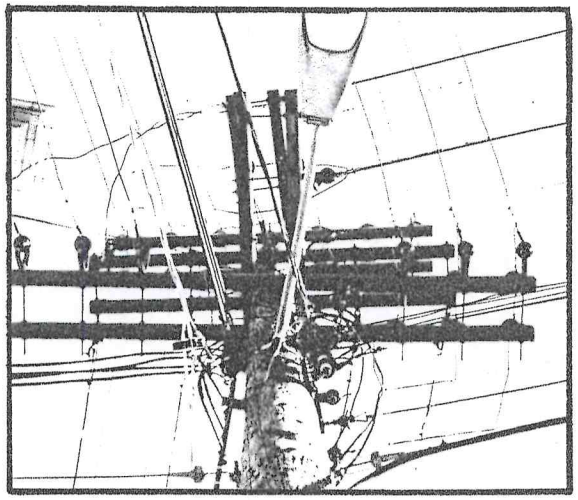
# Pedestrians

From the very beginning, those most familiar with downtown Lewiston have noted with dismay the almost total absence of pedestrian amenities. Indeed, in the "public ways" so meticulously laid out over a century ago for the horse and buggy, the automobile has now all but taken over. For the pedestrians, simply crossing the street can be hazardous and even basic conveniences, like a pay phone or a place to sit, are few.

Soon after LEWISTON TOMORROW was founded, the Pedestrian Amenities Committee began looking into these problems. Their charge was to devise a plan for first attracting people to downtown and then keeping them there. The Committee's recommendations follow:

## Problems

- Lack of pedestrian amenities and activities
- Visual clutter
- Difficulty of crossing major streets
- Poor access to parking facilities
- Neighborhood blight in lower Lisbon Street area
- Indifference to maintenance and repair of public improvements



# The Plan

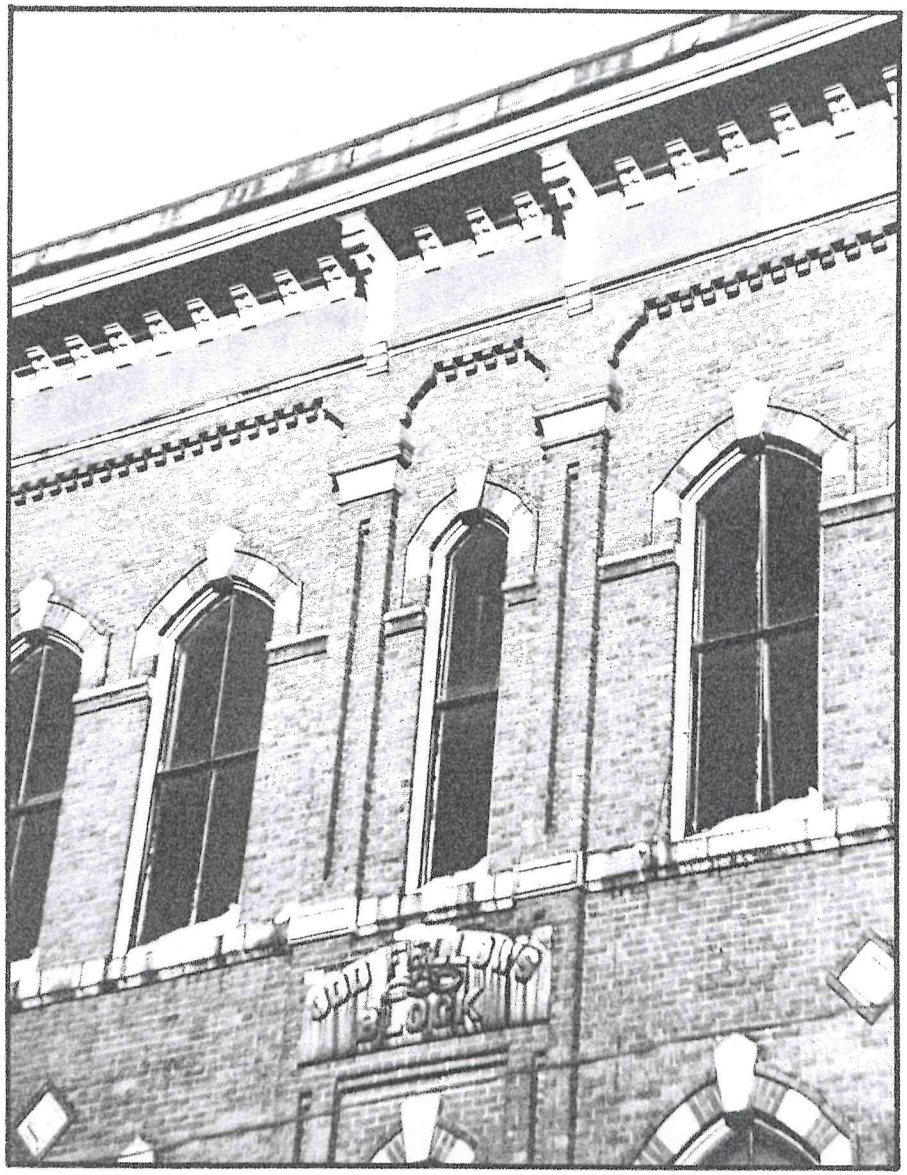
SHORT-RANGE

- Widen sidewalks by eliminating on-street parking, install street furniture and new lighting, and plant trees and shrubbery
- Construct bus shelters, pay telephones, kiosks, bicycle racks, and public rest-rooms
- Program public arts, recreation, child care, and leisure activities
- Enact strict sign controls, place over-head utilities underground
- Provide direct pedestrian access from Lisbon Street to parking facilities
- Selective demolition of dilapidated buildings
- Develop year round maintenance program

LONG-RANGE

- Construct sidewalk weather shield for pedestrians
- Build pedestrian overpasses across Main Street at Lisbon and Canal Streets to Bates Manufacturing
- Promote public alley space for retail uses
- Establish low cost or free public transit to service shopping districts
- Prepare lower Lisbon Street redevelopment strategy

# Buildings

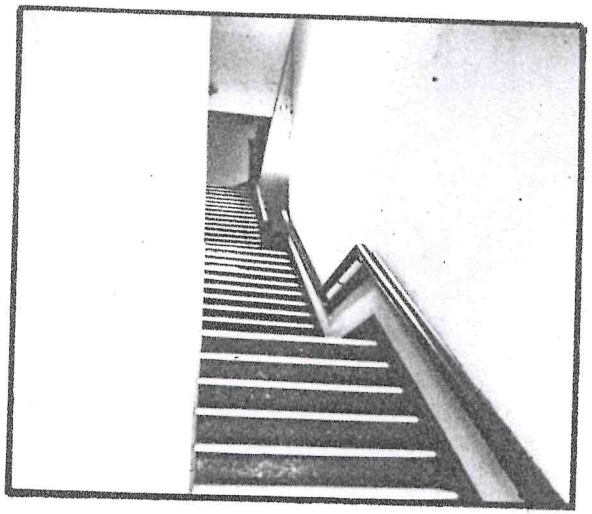



Downtown Lewiston features a rich variety of frame and masonry buildings, most of which were constructed over a period of fifty years beginning after the Civil War. Some are in fact outstanding examples of the architectural styles that they represent. But many have been seriously neglected over the years, becoming eyesores to the community and contributing to the spread of undesirable uses and neighborhood blight.

LEWISTON TOMORROW's Building Committee began studying these problems in late 1977 with the aim of halting further deterioration and encouraging the rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of existing structural resources. Following are the Committee's findings:

## Problems

- Unattractive Lisbon Street and Main Street gateways to downtown
- Inaccessability of Peck's area of Main Street
- Vacant or underutilized floor space on upper floors and at street level
- Uncontrolled spread of bars and clubs on lower Lisbon Street



# The Plan

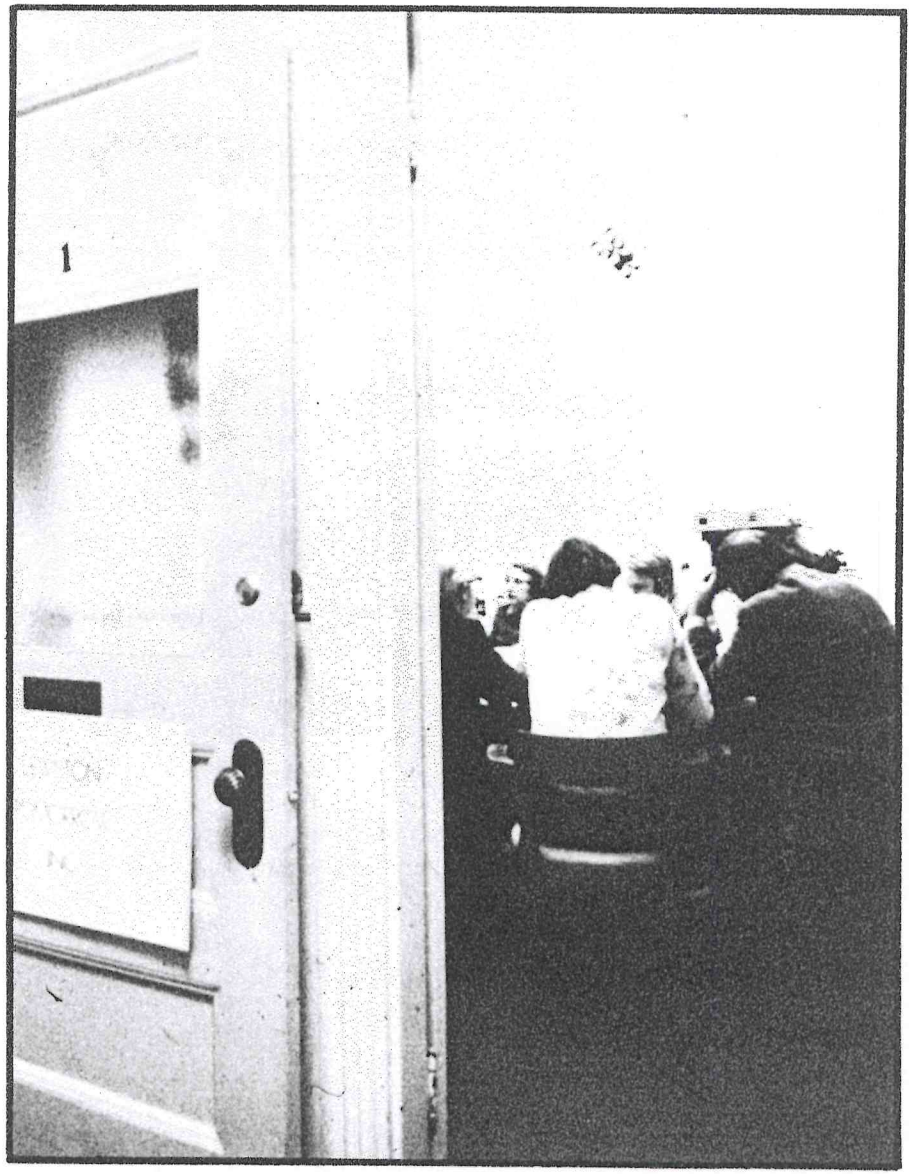
SHORT-RANGE

- Enact sign ordinance
- Spot demolition of deteriorated structures
- Move Main Street traffic islands to one side
- Installation of elevators and corridors servicing connected buildings
- Pedestrian bridges from Canal Street parking facility to Lisbon Street
- Encourage office and residential uses on upper floors
- Consolidate retailing on upper Lisbon Street and across Main Street
- Strict enforcement of local codes and liquor laws

LONG-RANGE

- Explore potential for hotel/motel development
- Construct pedestrian overpass to north side of Main Street
- Rejuvenate adjacent residential neighborhoods to maintain consumer population downtown
- Develop comprehensive program to reestablish strong Franco-American residential neighborhood

# Implementation

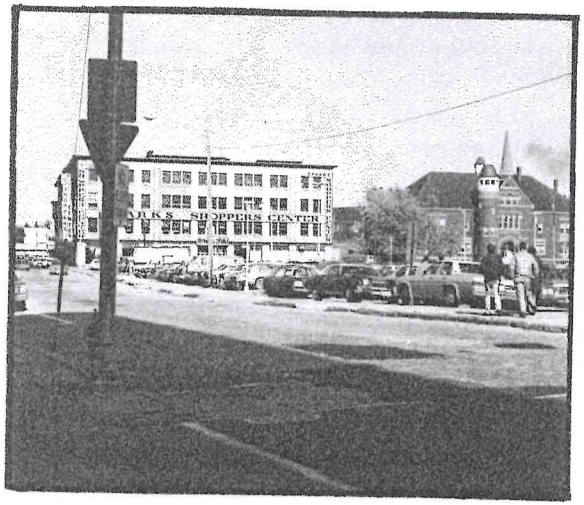


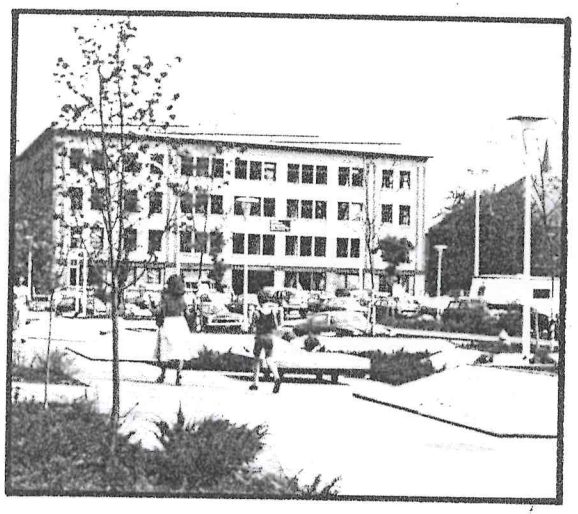
At an early point in the planning process, those involved understood that it was not enough merely to identify the problems and to recommend solutions. If LEWISTON TOMORROW really meant business about "making it happen," it was imperative to have an action plan as well, for without an implementation strategy, the best intentions of the other committees might never be realized.

The Implementation Committee of LEWISTON TOMORROW was organized at about the same time as the other committees, but with the aim of devising a strategy to finance the redevelopment program and to see it through to completion. Below is the Committee's plan:

## Problems

- Inadequate attention to providing needed public facilities and amenities
- Insufficient private investment and redevelopment incentives
- Need for public/private financing mechanisms





# The Plan

SHORT-RANGE

- Work with city government to obtain funds from state and federal agencies
- Explore limited partnership investment potential
- Local bank loan pool
- Rehabilitation loan subsidies
- Incentives to install elevators
- Encourage owners of appropriate buildings to have their properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- Small Business Administration (SBA) participation
- Construction of public improvements including parking, new sidewalks and streets, and beautification

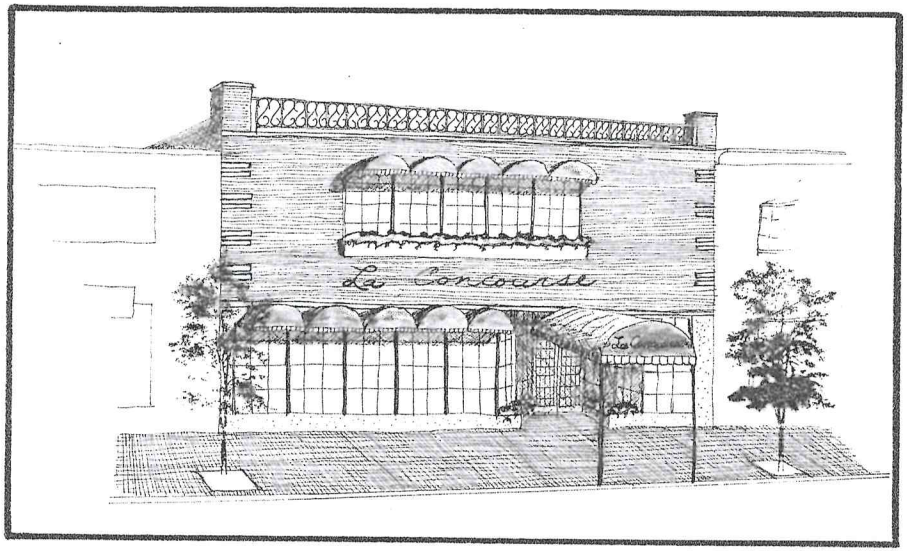
LONG-RANGE

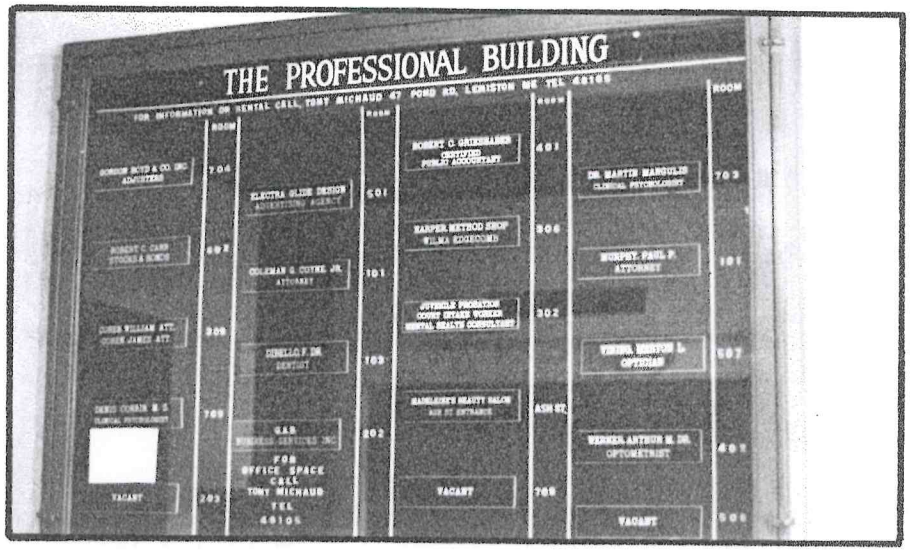
- Devise fair share assessment plan to insure proper maintenance of public improvements and professional management of newly redeveloped shopping and service district
- Implement historic districting with preservation incentives

# The Forecast

Does the business climate warrant major reinvestment in downtown Lewiston? The answer is definitely "YES!", according to a 1978 market assessment prepared at LEWISTON TOMORROW's request by Gladstone Associates, a well-known economic consultant. Gladstone predicts that while a major new department store may be difficult to attract to the area, smaller specialty shops will proliferate, supporting a significant annual increase in new retail floor space and creating scores of new jobs. At the same time, demand for modern office and residential space downtown will rise dramatically. As a result of these developments, the need for new entertainment and leisure facilities will also increase.

The economic forecast for downtown Lewiston is encouraging, but Gladstone warns that "public and private sectors must work toward a strategy of consolidating the downstreet by encouraging (commercial) development in the upper Lisbon Street area" which now accounts for about 70% of downtown retail sales but less that 25% of sales areawide.



*Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness — Isaiah*

STON EVENING JOURNAL

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LEWISTON-AUBURN, MAINE

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1978

# Grant In Hand, It's Roll-Up-Sleeves Time

## *There's Work To Be Done, Lots Of It*

By STEVE GREENE

The jubilant celebration is over. Now the hard work begins....

"I'm coming down out of the clouds today and looking at reality," Lewiston Mayor Lillian L. Caron commented this morning, still smiling after learning yesterday that the city's $3.16 million federal grant application has been approved. "There's a lot of hard work ahead of us."

Nearly everyone in Lewiston's city building was wearing a smile today, in fact — many believing that the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) funds to be pumped into the city over the next four years will lead to the renaissance of downtown Lewiston.

But the strong push on the part of city officials and private businessmen to put together a successful application package represents only the beginning of the effort necessary to turn planners' dreams and architects' blueprints into reality.

"We've got quite a job cut out for us," said Community Development Director Lucien Gosselin. The effort to date is "only the tip of the iceberg." The job to be done in the next three months, he indicated, includes expanding both the program's advisory group and staff, drawing up a timetable, and getting some elements of the program off the ground.

One of the first priorities, officials indicated, is to expand the city's UDAG Task Force to reflect the interests of all participating segments of the community.

"In preparing the UDAG application," said Gosselin, "we didn't want to duplicate the efforts of the Cityscale planners and Lewiston Tomorrow's assessment process. The UDAG Task Force was set up to include key individuals able to rapidly assimilate that data."

Now that the highly technical phase of planning an application is over, the next phase involves line-tuning the projects for implementation, he said. The task force, Gosselin believes, should now include representatives from the downtown business community, Public Works Board, and Planning Board, for example, in order to insure that many views are represented.

The 10-member task force appointed by Mayor Caron now includes Gosselin, Ward Two Alderman John Harkins, Finance Board member Carroll Minkowsky, Planning Director Gore Flynn, Planning Coordinator Richard Flewelling, Community Development Coordinators Dana Mulkern and Carol Tracy, Intergovernmental Coordinator Joseph Lemieux, Lewiston Economic Growth Council Director Michael Bancroft, and Lewiston Tomorrow Executive Director Nathaniel Bowditch.

The task force, however, is likely to remain a purely advisory body. "The major policy decisions should continue to be made by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen," Gosselin declared, "because the city will have to live with them for years to come."

In addition to the task force, the CD director pointed out, several ad hoc committees will probably be set up — one to select a site and oversee construction of a multi-level downtown parking garage, for example, and a design committee to implement the sidewalk widening, plantings, and other environmental improvements.

Two new employees will probably be added to the city payroll to coordinate the UDAG programs, Gosselin commented, although the program itself falls within the purview of the CD department. He will suggest that someone experienced with federal grant programs be hired as an overall coordinator, particularly "to follow through with the private sector commitments."

"A very elaborate coordinating mechanism must be created" for the UDAG program, which involves a package of over $22 million in federal, state, local, and private commitments. The coordinator must tie together program strands originating in the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Economic Development Administration (EDA), with private merchants, the Small Business Administration, local lending institutions, and other agencies.

**More Staff**

The UDAG grant includes administrative funds which would probably be used for the coordinator's salary, Gosselin said. A seco

Continued On Page 10, Col. 1

Asquith, Wendy Ouellette, and Greg Abbott. The project (see story) employs persons 55 years of age and above who earn a minimal income and allows them to work 25 hours each week. Mrs. Ridley is one of three women employed part-time at the Bates Street school (Staff Photo by Theberge).

## m helps elderly ing paying jobs

her initial application was turned down. She heard about the project, which pays employees minimum wage, from a friend.

Mrs. Ridley, on the other hand, tried on several occasions to find work but her age (62), she said, marred her chances.

"It is difficult to get a job when you're older," the silver-haired Mrs. Ridley noted. "I don't think the man (where she had applied for work) was intentionally discriminating against me but it was his feeling that the job required a younger person, mainly because it involved a lot of lifting."

Mrs. Ridley's experience is not rare among older Americans desiring to re-enter the job market. Studies have shown that many employers deny work to people over 55 on the basis that death, illnes ... disability will occur thus wasting the time and ...

## 109th ... s for handicapp

Making It Happen

# Today

In April, 1978, after months of careful planning and a rigorous federal review, Lewiston received a $3.2 million Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) with which to launch the "renaissance" of downtown. This grant, together with about $19 million in other federal, state, and local government aid, and private funds, will finance an ambitious four-year redevelopment project. A major portion of the public funds are available in the form of low-interest loans and related incentives to reinvest in private property. But the Urban Development Action Program (UDAP) also includes construction of the following public improvements:

## PARKING GARAGE

A major public parking facility for downtown Lewiston.

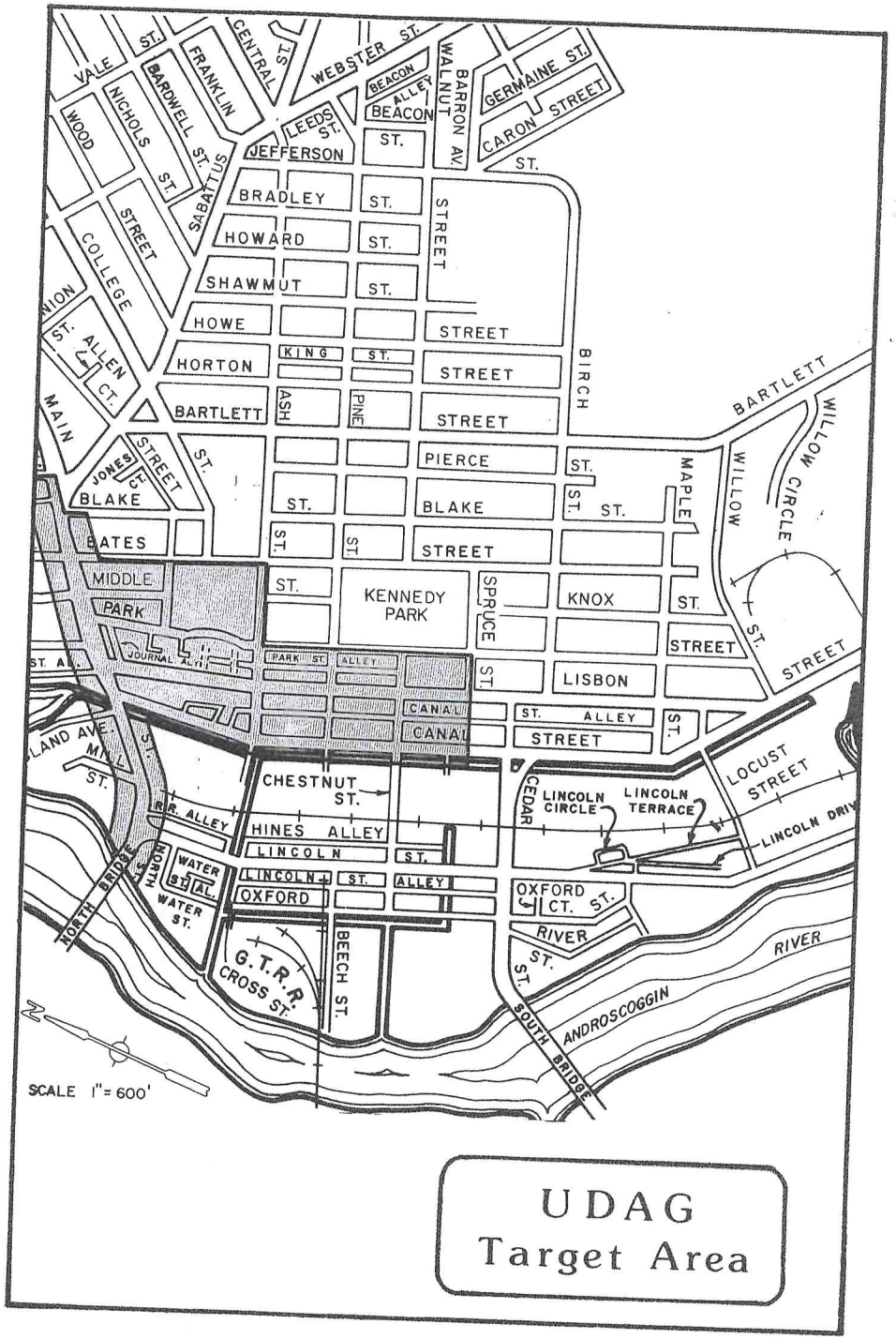
## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

A variety of pedestrian amenities including bus shelters, street furniture, lighting, information kiosks, and public telephones, as well as shade trees and planters.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

Replacement of worn-out underground utilities and substantial street and sidewalk reconstruction

For more information about public improvements, contact the Planning Department in City Hall.



The Urban Development Action Program (UDAP) also includes the following special financial incentives to stimulate private reinvestment:

## DOWNSTREET LOAN POOL

Seven local banks have set aside $5.5 million for low-interest loans to business and property owners in the UDAP Target Area. Loans with terms of up to ten years are available for property rehabilitation and business inventory expansion. In addition, terms of up to twenty years are available for property acquisition loans when accompanied by plans for substantial rehabilitation.

## REHABILITATION LOAN INTEREST RATE SUBSIDY

The City will subsidize all Downstreet Loan Pool property rehabilitation loans by another three percentage points.

## 50/50 COMMERCIAL REHAB LOAN PROGRAM

$100,000 in interest-free loans is available to match an equal amount of private funds from a participating lending institution for commercial facade rehabilitation in the central business district. Maximum interest-free loans will be $7,000, except that an additional $3,000 is available - interest-free and with no match required - for demolition.

## ELEVATOR GRANT PROGRAM

The City has $240,000 available to subsidize part or all of the cost of purchase and installation of passenger elevators in buildings at least three stories high. Grants will be based on the amount of additional rehabilitation generated in each building and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Buildings in the UDAP Target Area are eligible.

## SBA URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION LOAN PROGRAM

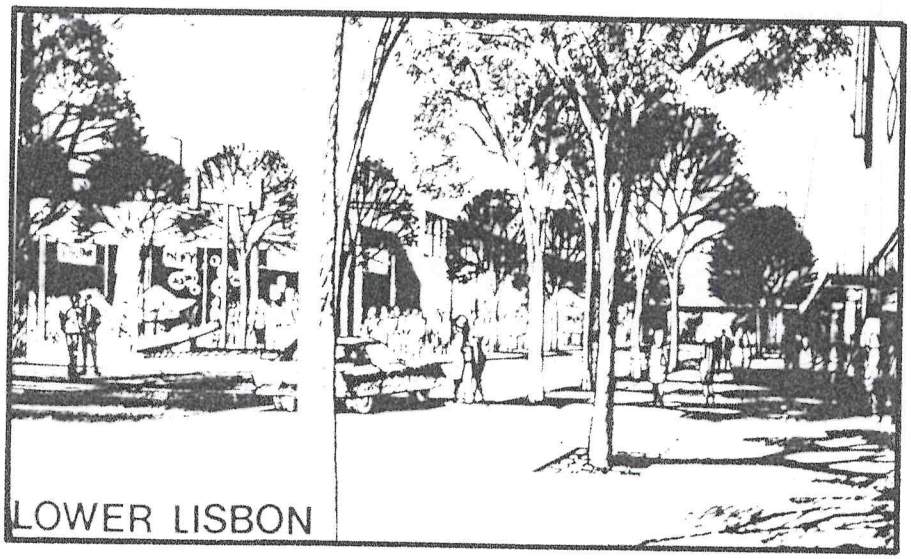
The Small Business Administration will make direct loans for commercial rehabilitation on a 75/25 basis. The 75% SBA Loan will be at a reduced interest rate, lowering the overall effective rate of borrowing significantly below prevailing commercial rates.

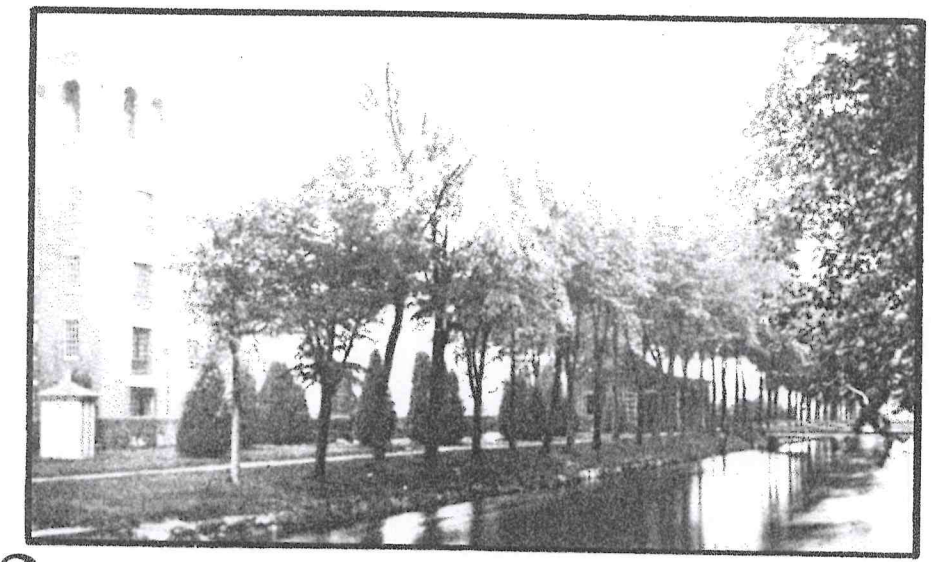
## SBA LOAN GUARANTEES

The Small Business Administration has agreed to guarantee loans to businesses in the UDAP Target Area under the 502 Program. Although each application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, a special effort will be made to coordinate loan guarantees with loans from the Downstreet Loan Pool.

For more information on, and application forms for, any of these programs, contact LEWISTON TOMORROW at 169 Lisbon Street.

# Tomorrow



Beyond 1982, the scheduled date for completion of the Urban Development Action Program (UDAP), LEWISTON TOMORROW has advanced a variety of other proposals designed to support the redevelopment effort and extend its impact to encompass the entire central business district. While no concensus has been reached and no timetable has been set, the following specific proposals clearly warrant further consideration:

## COMPLETE LISBON STREET REHABILITATION

Extending both public and private improvements to include that part of Lisbon Street from Spruce Street to the intersection with Canal Street is essential to the total revitalization of downtown Lewiston. As soon as funds become available, spot demolition, building rehabilitation, and public improvements could begin to make this neighborhood an attractive gateway to, and viable part of, the downtown community.

## RECONSTRUCT CANAL STREET

The entire length of Canal Street should eventually be reconstructed, particularly if through traffic is removed from Lisbon Street and Canal Street becomes the principal two-way traffic artery through downtown. As part of the necessary widening and reconstruction, shade trees and lawn could be replanted and attractive fencing installed to help restore the appearance of this once beautiful area.

## ENCLOSE LISBON STREET

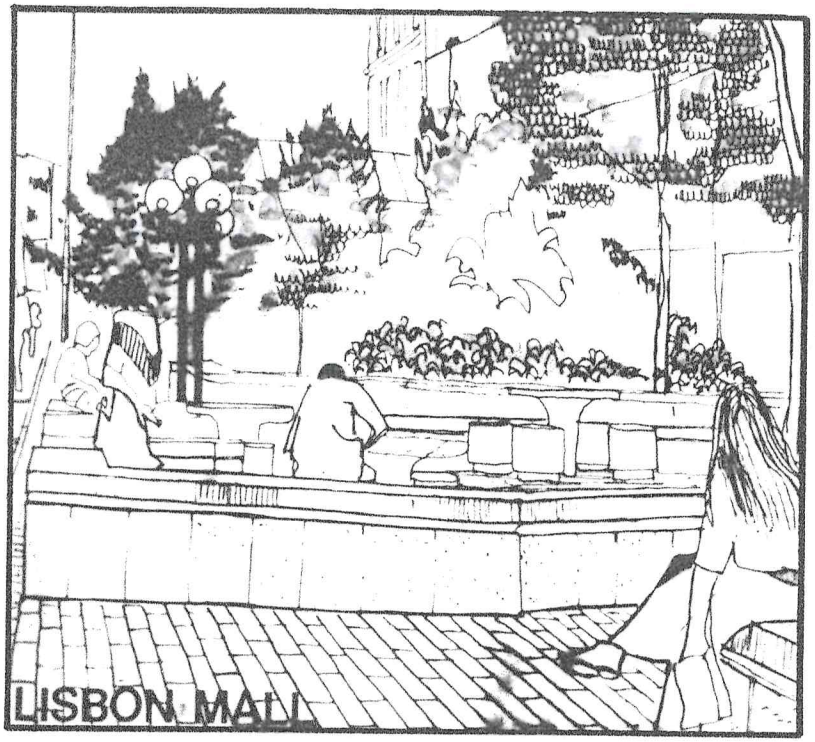
Some have suggested that to shield pedestrians from inclement weather, either all or a portion of Lisbon Street and the adjoining sidewalks could be enclosed or covered with a protective canopy.

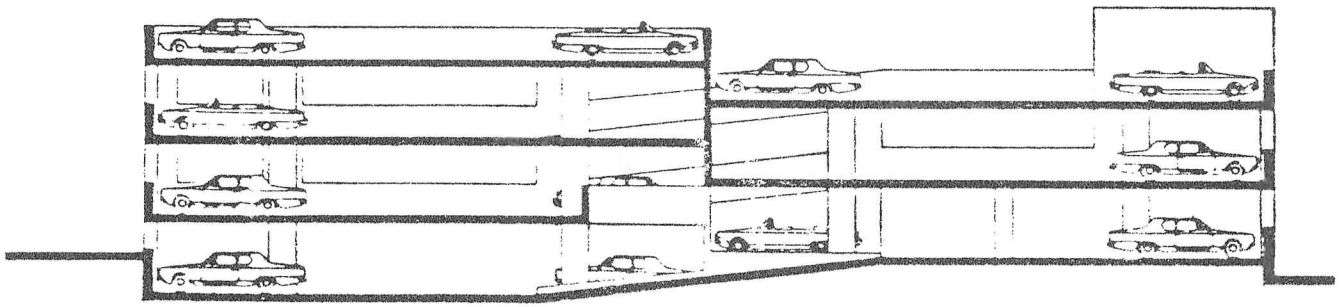
## IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

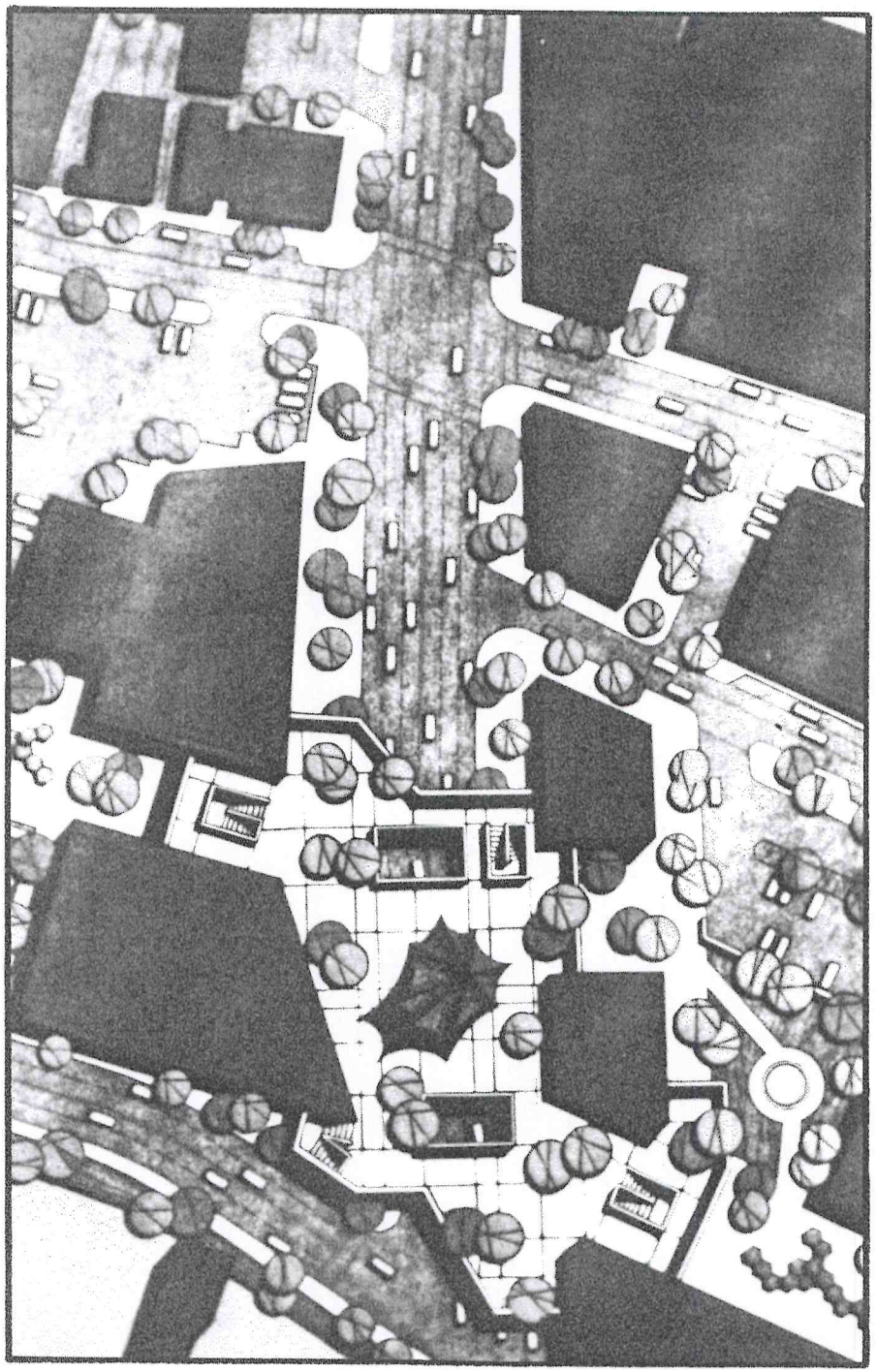
A free or low-cost shuttle bus service from parking areas to the center of downtown could further alleviate over-crowded streets. An attractive bus terminal, centrally located, would also help attract visitors to the area.

## ESTABLISH HOTEL/CONFERENCE CENTER

A major lodging and conference facility downtown would attract and service a whole new group of consumers, businesspeople, and visitors.

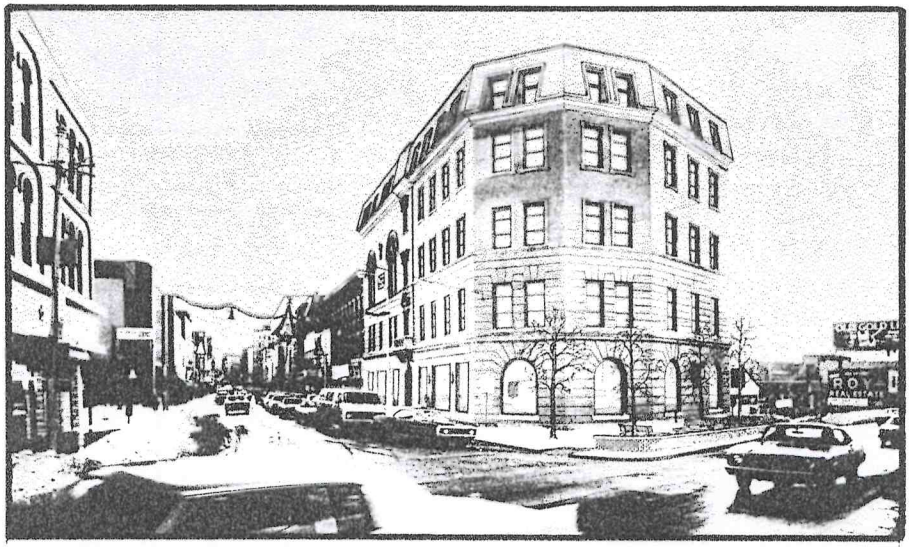




## LINK MAIN AND LISBON STREETS

It is absolutely essential to break down the physical and psychological barriers that separate the Peck's area of Main Street from the more accessible parts of Lisbon Street. Some have proposed a pedestrian over-pass to separate vehicular from foot traffic, while others have suggested that a mini-mall or a Maine products center be established there to help draw pedestrians to the north side of Main Street.

## DEVELOP FAIR SHARE ASSESSMENT PLAN

In order to ensure that public improvements will be well maintained and that redevelopment gains are managed properly, a system should be developed whereby those benefitting most from the improvements would pay their fair share of the cost of upkeep.