

## 2.0 VISION FOR THE BUSINESS DISTRICT

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Before development concepts, physical and design plans, and implementation strategies are created for Clayton's business districts, the community needed to reach a consensus as to the general role, function, and form the districts should assume for the City's residents and in relation to the greater St. Louis metropolitan area. This section describes that "vision" for the future of the Central Business District and puts it in context with previous roles the area has served in the past. Also outlined in this section are five key vision components that have been identified as critical to the Central Business District's fully realizing its overall vision for the future. In addition, four other important components to the vision for the business districts have been described in Section 2.3.

### 2.1 PAST IDENTITIES, PRESENT ROLE AND FUTURE VISION

Visitors passing through Clayton's CBD receive a snapshot impression. At first glance the CBD seems fully developed with many office towers and parking garages. On the other hand, the moving picture experienced by the community's long-term residents and business owners is of an urban center which is continually evolving and rebuilding. Inefficient and inappropriate development is being replaced with uses and structures which meet today's needs and market opportunities. The vision for Clayton's CBD must, therefore, address Clayton's moving picture in a manner which is both bold and responsive to the community; a vision which looks both to the near future and to more distant possibilities.

Clayton has always been a community with a vision for its Central Business District. From its earlier streetcar days as a retail and commerce center to its evolution into a regional corporate and government office center, Clayton's CBD has had several visions and identities that have led to its viability and success over the years. But changing regional and national economic conditions have created the need to establish a new vision for the Central Business District. A vision that reflects the residents' needs and quality of life expectations while also capitalizing upon the district's economic development assets and opportunities to ensure a strong tax base for the City.

Today Clayton remains a premier office and residential address. However, it is also in a period of transition as general merchandise retailing and service commercial uses are increasingly opting for non-CBD locations while restaurants are seemingly more anxious than ever to locate in central Clayton. The Clayton office market is likewise in a transition period during this time of

an over-built market. While the office occupancy rate in Clayton remains above that for the metropolitan area as a whole, it is slightly below the suburban market occupancy rate. Clayton today is facing competition for office tenants and development as never before. This competition is most intense from a revitalized Downtown St. Louis with its convention center and entertainment, MetroLink and other urban amenities, as well as from the suburban office markets, especially these along the I-64/U.S. 40 corridor to the west. These suburban competitors offer prestigious corporate environments in a variety of campus settings with inexpensive surface parking and amenities characteristic of suburban development.

In the preceding three decades, Clayton's vision for its CBD was predicated upon its image as a corporate office center with a high quality of life in its surrounding residential neighborhoods. The future vision for the Central Business District should include retaining this quality office and residential image. However, it must go further and incorporate urban design improvements and expand the specialty retail/dining/entertainment/culture uses and an expanded county government center in order to create an interesting pedestrian-scale urban environment unparalleled in the metropolitan area. The following paragraphs describe the most important components for achieving this vision.

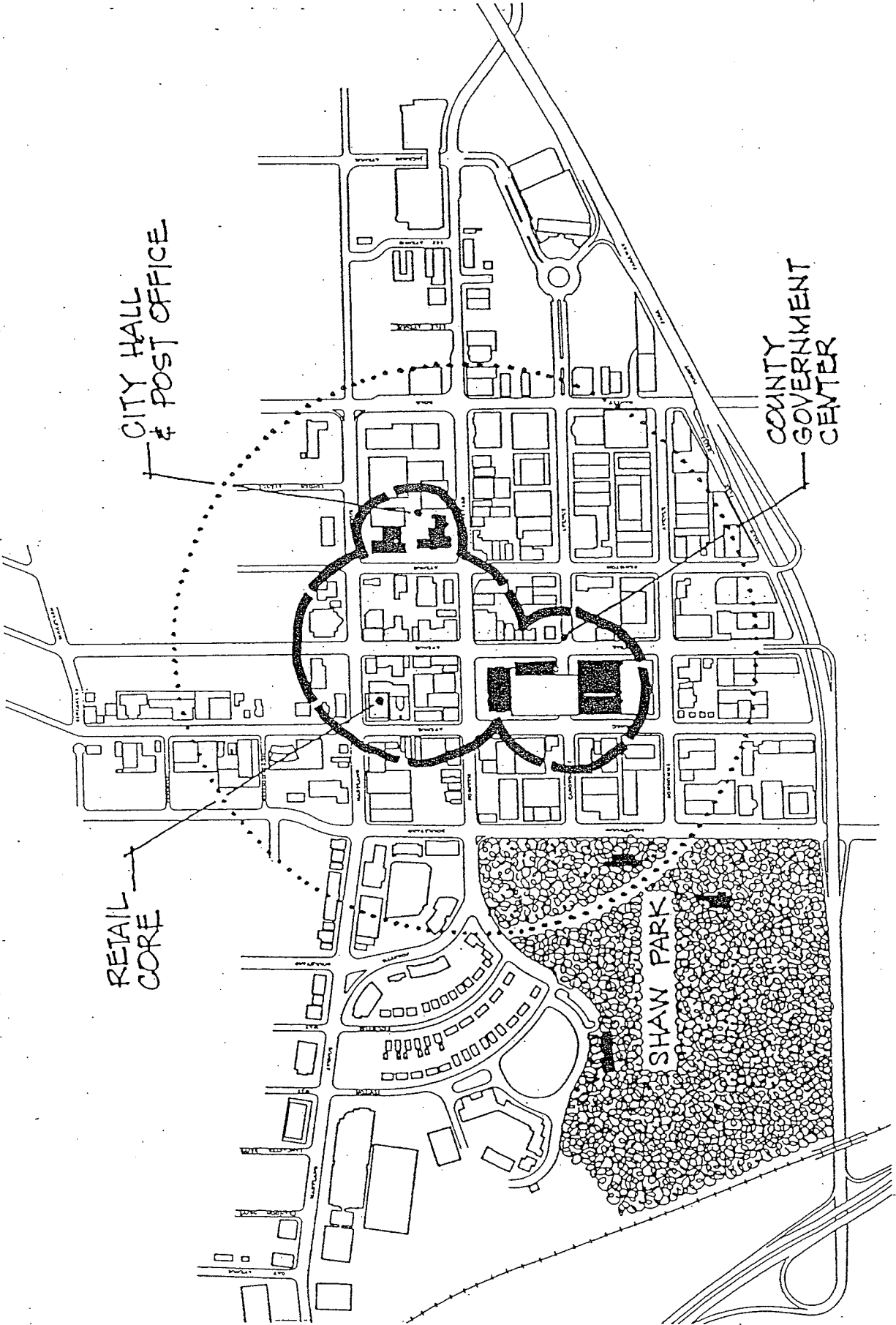
## 2.2 KEY VISION COMPONENTS

The five concepts presented below represent the most important elements in the Business Districts Master Plan for achieving the future vision for the Central Business District. In many ways they will serve as the foundation or for the planning, design, and market strategies developed in other parts of the plan.

### 2.2.1 Retail/Mixed Use Core

There is a need for one area to be the centerpiece of the CBD-- this should be the retail/mixed use core -- a place where Clayton's business and residential communities and visitors can converge to browse and explore, to visit a cafe, enjoy entertainment, and to engage in the most popular of urban pastimes "people-watching". The retail/mixed use core must also be the hub of pedestrian activity in Clayton's CBD if it is to succeed as a magnet or "place to be".

*Location.* The retail/mixed use core includes the three city blocks bounded on the north and south by Maryland Avenue and Forsyth Boulevard and on the east and west by Bemiston and



CITY HALL  
& POST OFFICE

COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT  
CENTER

RETAIL  
CORE

SHAW PARK

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Brentwood Boulevard. Also included are the properties fronting Central Avenue from Forsyth to Carondelet.

*Context and History.* Historically, this area was the retail area which complemented the County Government, City Hall and other institutions. Topographically this is high ground for the City and relatively level. The success of the retail area up until recently explains the low rise development in the core area relative to adjoining blocks which currently house office towers.

*Concept.* The retail/mixed use core is envisioned as the heart of the CBD, characterized by a concentration of people and activities, an ambient urban setting with streets defined by continuous two to four story architecture, animated with upper story windows and ground level shops and storefronts. It is to be a special environment, a concentration of shops and attractions which extends into the block interiors via alleys, new pedestrian ways, and interior retail centers. Uses within the core should have extended hours of activity into evenings and weekends. The area would serve the local neighborhoods, the business community and visitors from out of town. This area should be designed for the pedestrian not the automobile.

*Density.* Density is important to the CBD and the retail/mixed use core and can be translated into more people and greater amounts of physical and economic vitality. Density, however does not necessitate towers. High densities can be achieved through lower rise buildings with larger footprints. Vertical development energy should be distributed over a larger area to ensure an uninterrupted building edge. The core area should be characterized by lower rise development which preserves light, vistas, and ensures a pedestrian scale setting. The low rise core would be surrounded by towers, physically defining this pedestrian center. Existing zoning density for the core area allows a floor area ratio (F.A.R.) of 3.0. This density could be achieved with development of five to six stories for blocks of Clayton's dimension without resorting to towers. Building heights should maximize the development opportunity without jeopardizing the pedestrian environment and quality of place.

*Mixed-Uses.* The core should include mixed uses with ground level retail and a variety of upper story uses to contribute to the area's excitement and vitality: commercial, office, residential and institutional. New development should continue to

concentrate retail and attraction energy within this compact area. Care should be taken in allowing new retail development outside the retail core until its position is well established and any such more peripheral retail development should be larger, one of a kind destination retail businesses.

*Parking.* One ingredient for the success of any retail area is the perception of convenient parking. All streets within the retail core should have parallel on-street parking. These spaces should continue to be metered short-term, high rent parking spaces.

There are two future opportunities for public parking to serve the retail core area; (1) in the 8000 block of Forsyth, north side, (2) in the 7800 block of Forsyth, north side. Parking within both sites should be in garages within the interior of the block. The 8000 block currently has surface parking and could service the retail core via the vacant lot on Meramec or a service alley which would require pedestrian amenities. The 7800 block could, because of grade change from Central to Bemiston, be a multi-level garage buried in the hillside with minimal impact to the skyline or retail street frontage. For additional discussion of parking see section 2.3.4.

*Urban Design.* The retail core should be a very urban environment with continuous development facing all streets and minimum ground level building setbacks from right-of-way lines. Future redevelopment should spread continuously along all block edges and create interesting interior courtyard spaces such as that presently found at the Seven Gables Hotel.

Special guidelines and standards are required to ensure that the retail core area achieves the retail vitality and pedestrian environment that Clayton requires to be a successful urban center. The standards should focus on the form of development rather than setting development limits. The exception to this would be modifying the "no height" limit to seven stories/90 feet, the C-2 standard. Standards and development guidelines for the Retail/Mixed Use Core are best implemented through an overlay zoning district for the area. The standards applicable to this district are detailed in this section 5.2.1.

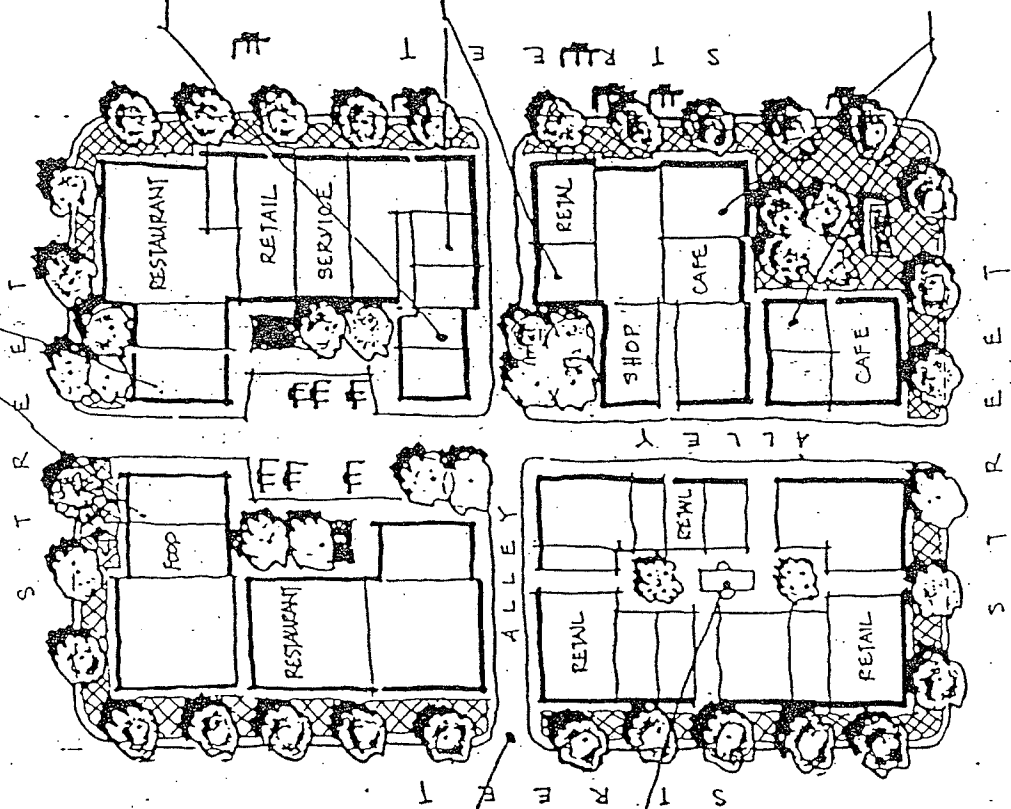
*Streetscape Environment.* The streetscape improvements within the retail core should exhibit the highest standards of materials

LOCAL SERVICE/RETAIL  
FACING ONTO NEIGHBORHOOD.

SMALL SQ.FT.  
INCUBATOR  
RETAIL

RETAIL  
FACING  
ONTO ALLEY

CLUSTER OF  
EATERIES  
FACE ONTO  
PARK/PUZZA



ALLEY SERVES  
PEDESTRIAN and  
SERVICE

RETAIL CENTER  
WITH INTERIOR  
COURT

and design that the City of Clayton has to offer. If successful, this will be the area of highest pedestrian traffic within the City. The sidewalks should have a special paving treatment which would contribute to a festive atmosphere and distinguish them from other areas in the CBD, canopy trees in planters with tree grates to accommodate pedestrian traffic, and lights in scale with the retail environment. Special provisions such as electrical outlets and water supply should be provided for seasonal events in addition to street furniture such as benches and trash baskets.

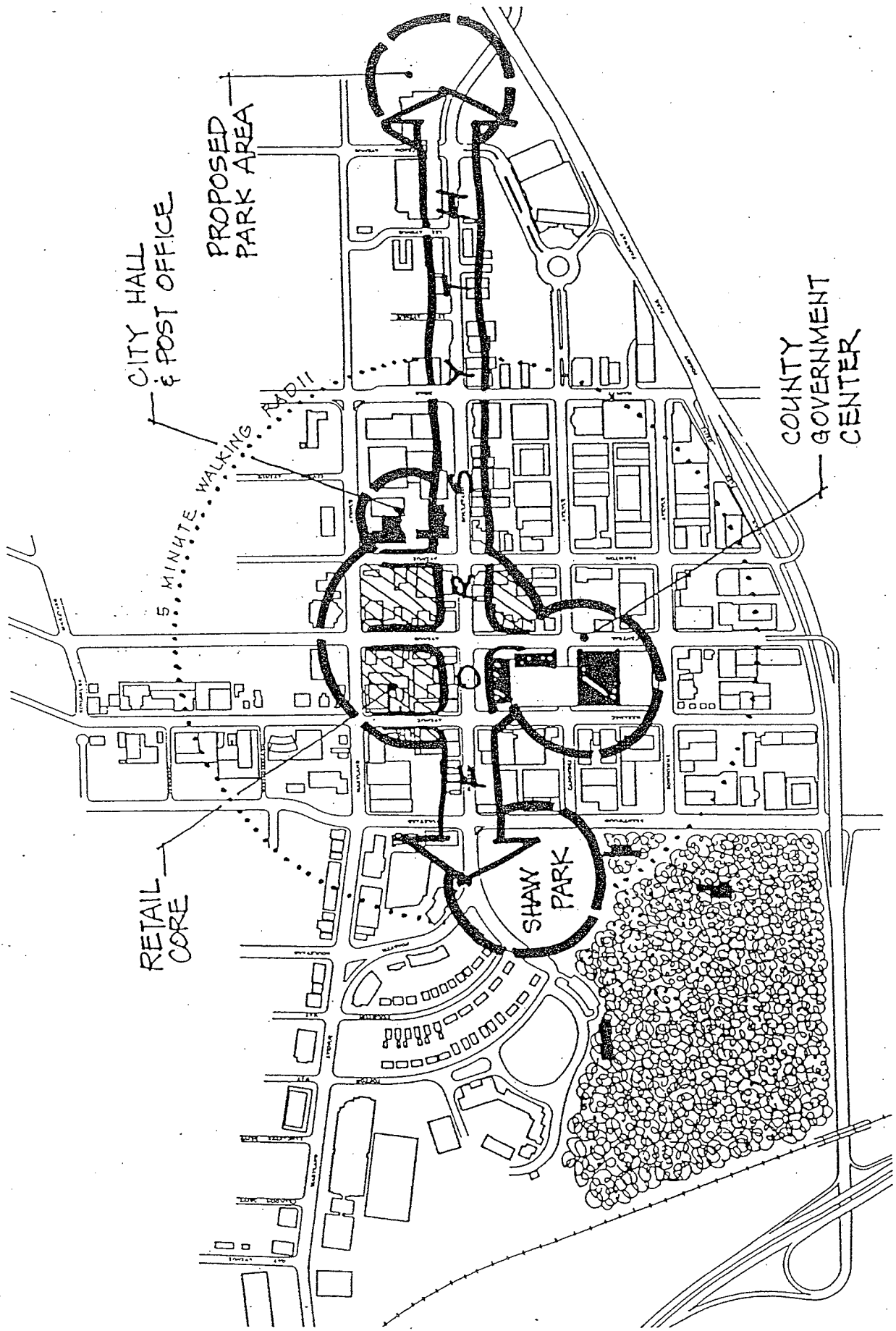
*Special Open Space Environment.* In conjunction with the special streetscape environment, the master plan provides for a few key open space (park/plaza) areas within the retail core block interiors. These areas would act as small focal points for interior block development and would encourage exploration and discovery that could occur within the block interior, linked to streets by alleys and pedestrian ways. The courtyards would be relatively small, possibly accommodating a small tree. They could serve as cafe areas and outdoor displays during comfortable weather and as light wells during inclement weather.

*Introduction of Pushcarts.* Another concept to add vitality to the retail core would be the use of vendor pushcarts. Section 5.2.4 contains a list of design and ordinance recommendations to consider in regulating pushcarts in Clayton's CBD.

As the first key vision component, the creation of the Retail/Mixed Use Core as a special place in Clayton's CBD is truly a key component to the vision for the Central Business District. It will provide an interesting, exciting pedestrian enclave for residents, visitors, and CBD workers which will increase the CBD's competitive edge and position as a desirable place to work, live, shop, and invest.

### 2.2.2 Forsyth Corridor

As the retail/mixed-use core area has been identified as CBD's heart, Forsyth Boulevard is envisioned to become the spine of the CBD area. This street will become the main armature within Clayton's CBD infrastructure, the one road to which all roads link, the premier street in the CBD. Forsyth Boulevard should become to Clayton what Pennsylvania Avenue is to



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Washington D.C.

*Concept.* As the city's ceremonial civic street, Forsyth Boulevard should be anchored with major open space areas and redevelopment. The western terminus will be Shaw Park and a proposed high density residential area in the present Topton Brighton Way district. On the east Boulevard terminus, a major public open space is proposed that would be surrounded by major redevelopment. As the grand promenade, Forsyth Boulevard will pass through and link several use districts beginning on the west with the residential and Shaw Park area, passing through the retail core, the county government center, City Hall and a mixed-use area. From Hanley east, the Boulevard will provide the focus for three major redevelopment opportunities each of which will likely be comprised of several smaller development projects.

This cosmopolitan boulevard, besides offering a variety of uses, would also provide a rich pedestrian environment with a distinctive streetscape treatment which would identify this area as distinct from the retail core and other streets in the CBD. A series of small parks and plaza areas will further enhance the cosmopolitan pedestrian environment.

*Location.* The special promenade treatment of Forsyth Boulevard would begin on the west with the intersection of Forsyth and Maryland Avenue and would continue along Forsyth Boulevard to a visual terminus at the Washington University property and a physical ending at the intersection of Forest Park Parkway.

*Rationale.* The proposed promenade portion of Forsyth Boulevard is approximately three quarters of a mile long, one of the longer roadway sections in the CBD. This roadway is centrally located and links several important assets; the County Government Center, City Hall, the retail core, Shaw Park, and Washington University. The roadway presently is the focus of development, with buildings north and south of the street facing onto the roadway. Historically, this was a main thoroughfare with the old county government building and City Hall located along the roadway. There are also several development opportunities along this proposed civic thoroughfare which can help reinforce and enhance the concept of Forsyth Boulevard as the main civic street in Clayton's CBD.

*Urban Design.* Existing development along Forsyth Boulevard varies as to building setback and building height. The retail core area has low rise development with the buildings sited at the right-of-way line while development such as Pierre Laclède Center is more campus-like in character, with larger building setbacks and high rise towers. This variety of site development patterns does not distract from the desired character, but is rather cosmopolitan and appropriate. The streetscape treatment should be the unifying element along Forsyth Boulevard. Future development opportunities should respect their subdistrict character rather than having a single setback and building height limit mandated for the entire length of the roadway.

*Streetscape Environment.* The Forsyth Boulevard sidewalk treatment should appear generous in its dimension and evoke a contemplative attitude to the visitor. The streetscape treatment should be unique to Forsyth Boulevard and yet be compatible with other streets within the CBD.

*Pocket Park Opportunities.* The concept of Forsyth Boulevard as a pedestrian promenade, a place where the business community as well as residents and visitors could take a stroll, would be further enhanced with the introduction of a series of small pocket parks integrated into private development scattered along the full length of the promenade. The small parks could be created within existing building setbacks or identified and implemented within future development sites. The parks would be small in dimension and range from very passive green areas with simple seating and sidewalks to plazas with hard features. Each park would be the minor focus for surrounding development. When viewed in its entirety, the boulevard would be a sequence of individual park attractions, each with its own season of bloom and emphasis. When combined with the major anchor park areas to the east and west, this series of intimate parks will create a very special environment, something unique to Clayton.

To be successful, these small park areas need to adhere to some simple design standards:

- Park areas should be easily accessible and occur at the same level as sidewalk.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



RETAIL CORE

CITY HALL & POST OFFICE

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

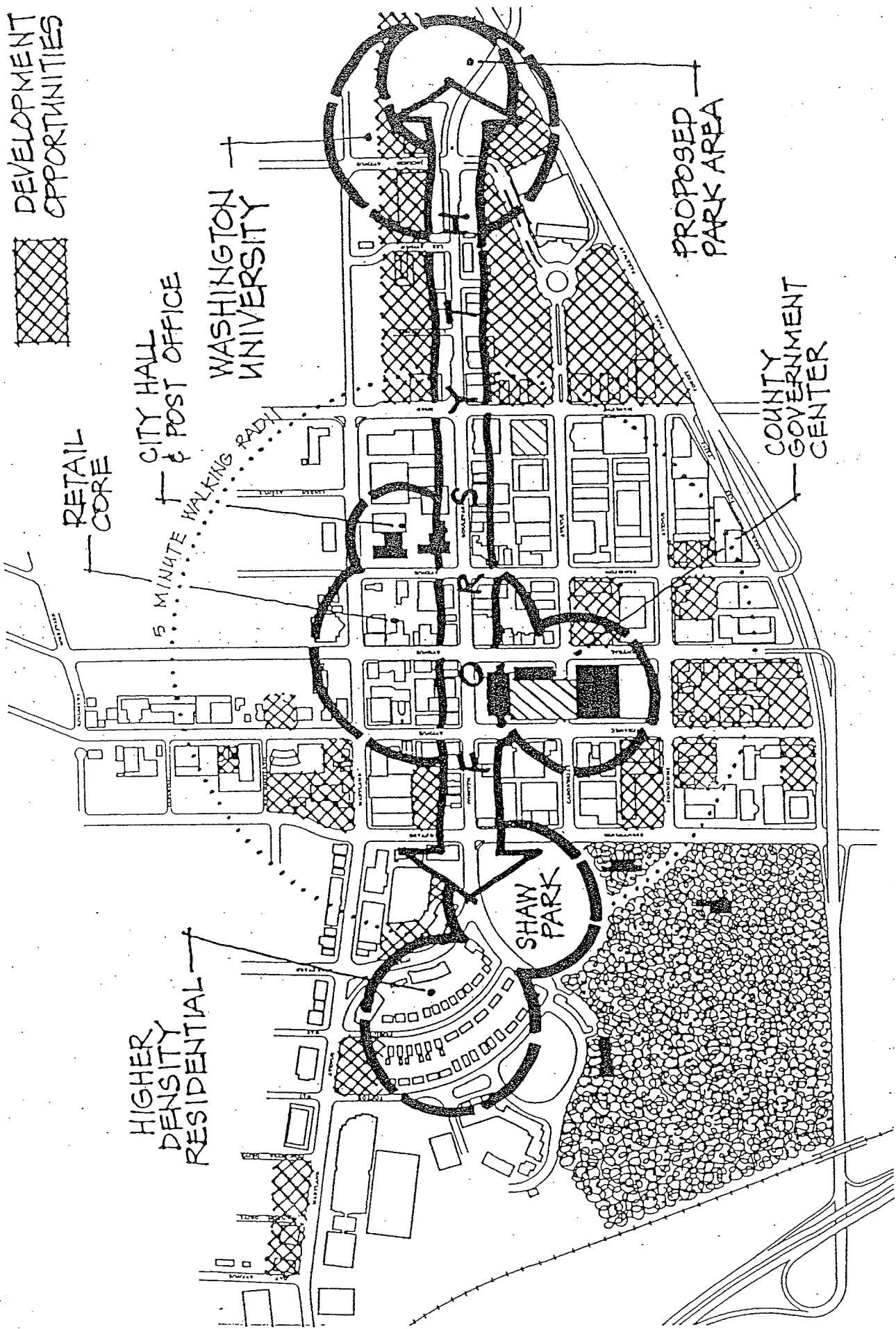
5 MINUTE WALKING RADIUS

HIGHER DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

SHAW PARK

PROPOSED PARK AREA

COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER



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- Security should be achieved through elimination of visual barriers, provision of numerous access points and adequate lighting.
- Maintenance and durability should be addressed in all designs.

As the second key vision component, the Forsyth Corridor will provide an important unifying lineal element linking the entire CBD from east to west. This concept will tie together what are perceived as areas of disconnected development and redevelopment opportunities.

### 2.2.3 County Government Center

The location of St. Louis County's government seat has had a major catalytic effect on the development the Central Business District. Historically the city has benefitted from the County's presence. As the county continues to grow and become a major urban center in its own right, the city will benefit even further by being the center of county activity. Conversely, it is important for the county to be a participant in the premier center that Clayton is today and will be in the future. This relationship should be further enhanced with the introduction of the MetroLink light rail system within the City and County.

*Concept.* As the County continues to grow and prosper, its facilities will also need to grow and be technically improved to better serve their constituency. The decision to develop a new Justice Center provides the opportunity to reevaluate the old county building (police/highway) and the accompanying plaza area to the south.

A decision to remove the old county building facing Forsyth would create the opportunity to develop a public green as the focus for both the CBD and County Government Center. This in turn will allow direct visual and physical access from the County Courts Building to Forsyth Boulevard. The existing plaza could be developed as a second county office tower which would frame the link to the Court Building. An additional parking garage could be developed below the proposed City/County green.

*Justice Center.* The new Justice Center should contribute to the overall CBD environment rather than having an inward orientation. The upper stories of the new building should be harmonious and compatible with surrounding office development in design, materials, and color. The Center should be animated with show windows on the ground floor (normal dimension) and window areas on the second and upper story floors. The use of windowless, blank wall areas should be minimized on all street frontage elevations. All elements of security should be tastefully blended into the architectural design, undistinguishable from normal architectural treatment. The design for the building should have a civic presence suitable for a public institution. A minimal building setback should be provided for landscaping around the building perimeter, but otherwise the sidewalk area should be typical of the surrounding urban sidewalk treatment (see Urban Streets, 4.1.3).

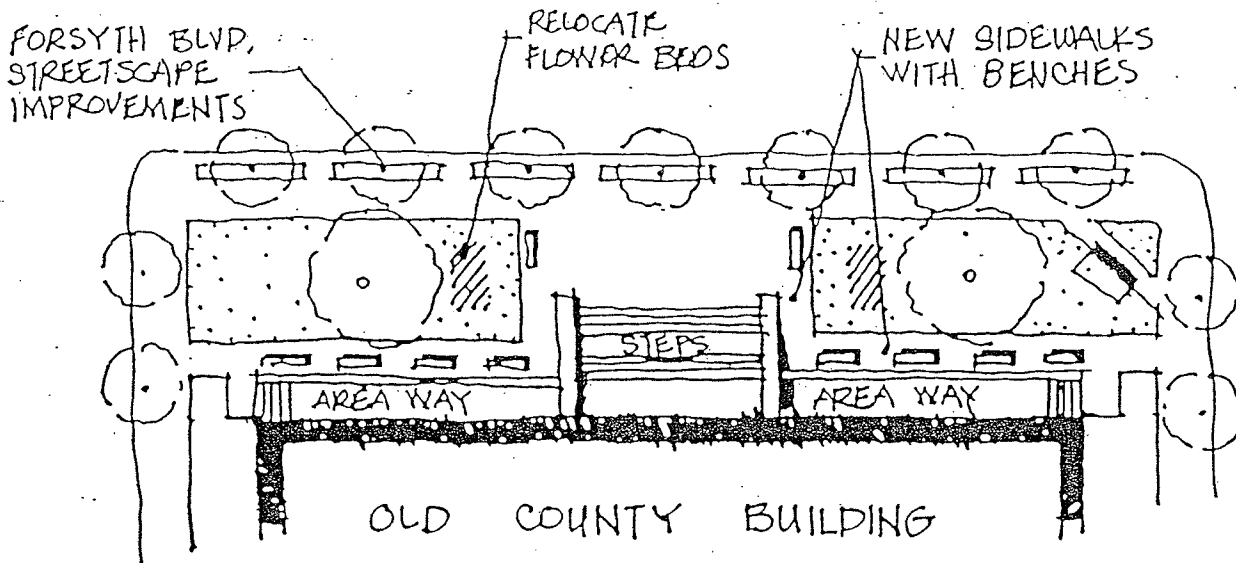
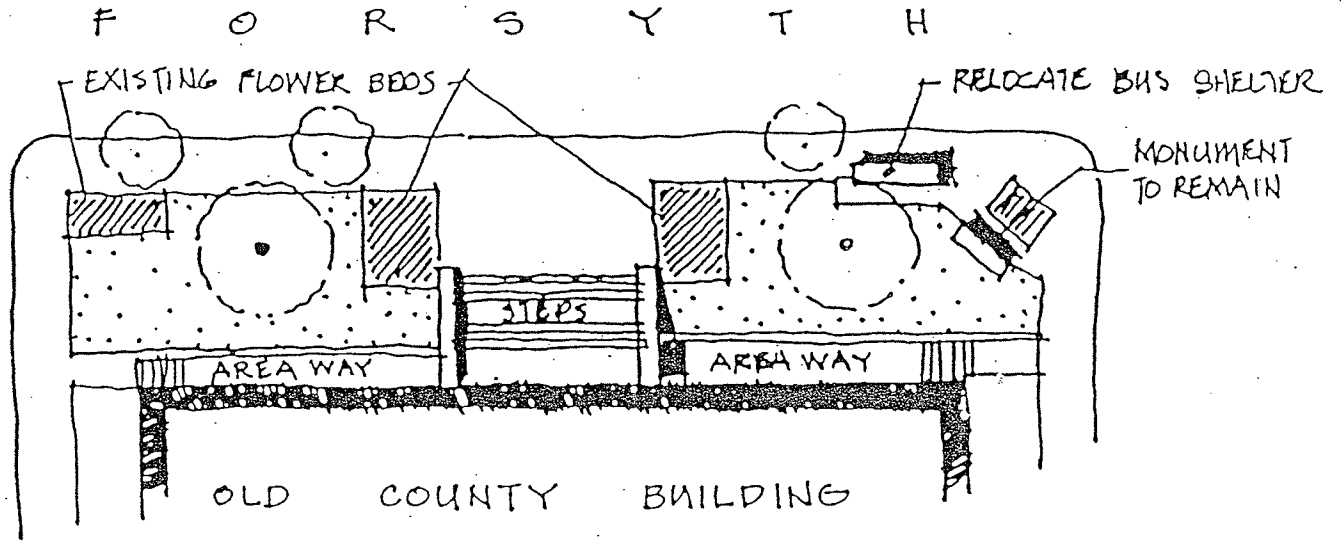
*City/County Green.* Historically the epicenter for the CBD was in the area of the old county building. This was the summit for Forsyth Boulevard, important for the retail core and the grand promenade along Forsyth Boulevard. The City of Clayton presently lacks a premier urban gathering place. The creation of a park green on the site of the old county building would provide the civic focus so important to a city of Clayton's stature. The park green would become the central landmark for the CBD.

*Concept.* The master plan vision calls for a park of approximately 200' x 300' (1½ acres) on the present location of the old county building. This area would be bounded by Forsyth Boulevard on the north, Meramec on the west and Central on the east. There is an added opportunity for a below ground parking garage to serve the Government Center and surrounding retail core area.

Development of the city/county green will likely be several years away. Interim improvements to the existing landscaped area in front of the Old County Building could be implemented in a few months. This area can become more pedestrian-friendly, sidewalks, and benches could be introduced along the building edge and next to the steps providing outdoor seating for lunch time traffic.

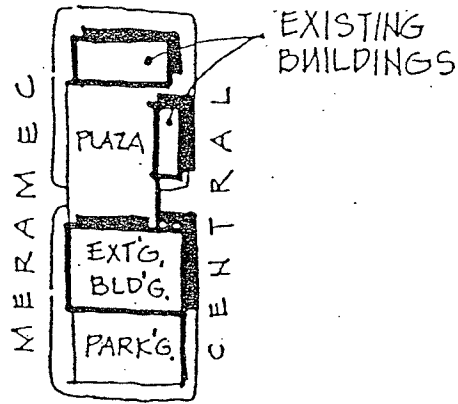
The park area is envisioned as a simple, centrally located lawn

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

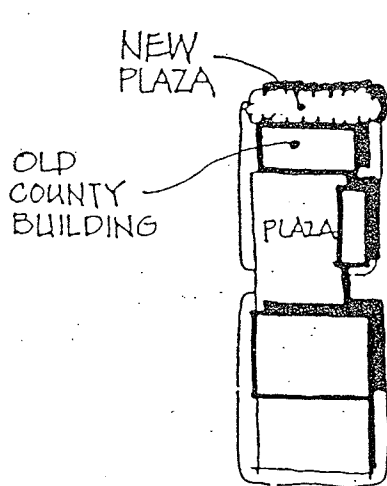


# PROPOSED PARK AREA IMPROVEMENTS

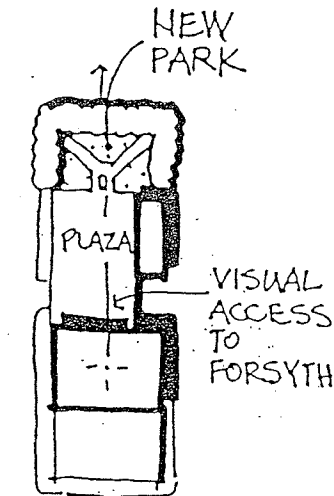
FORSYTH



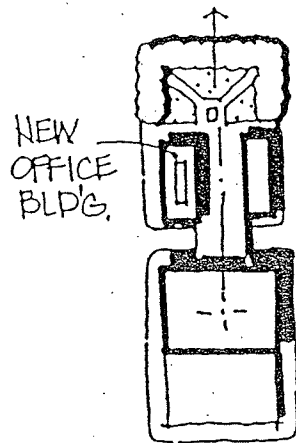
EXISTING CONDITIONS



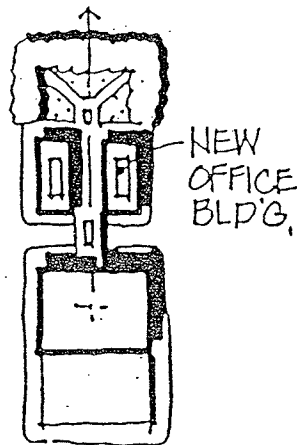
PHASE ONE



PHASE TWO



PHASE THREE



PHASE FOUR

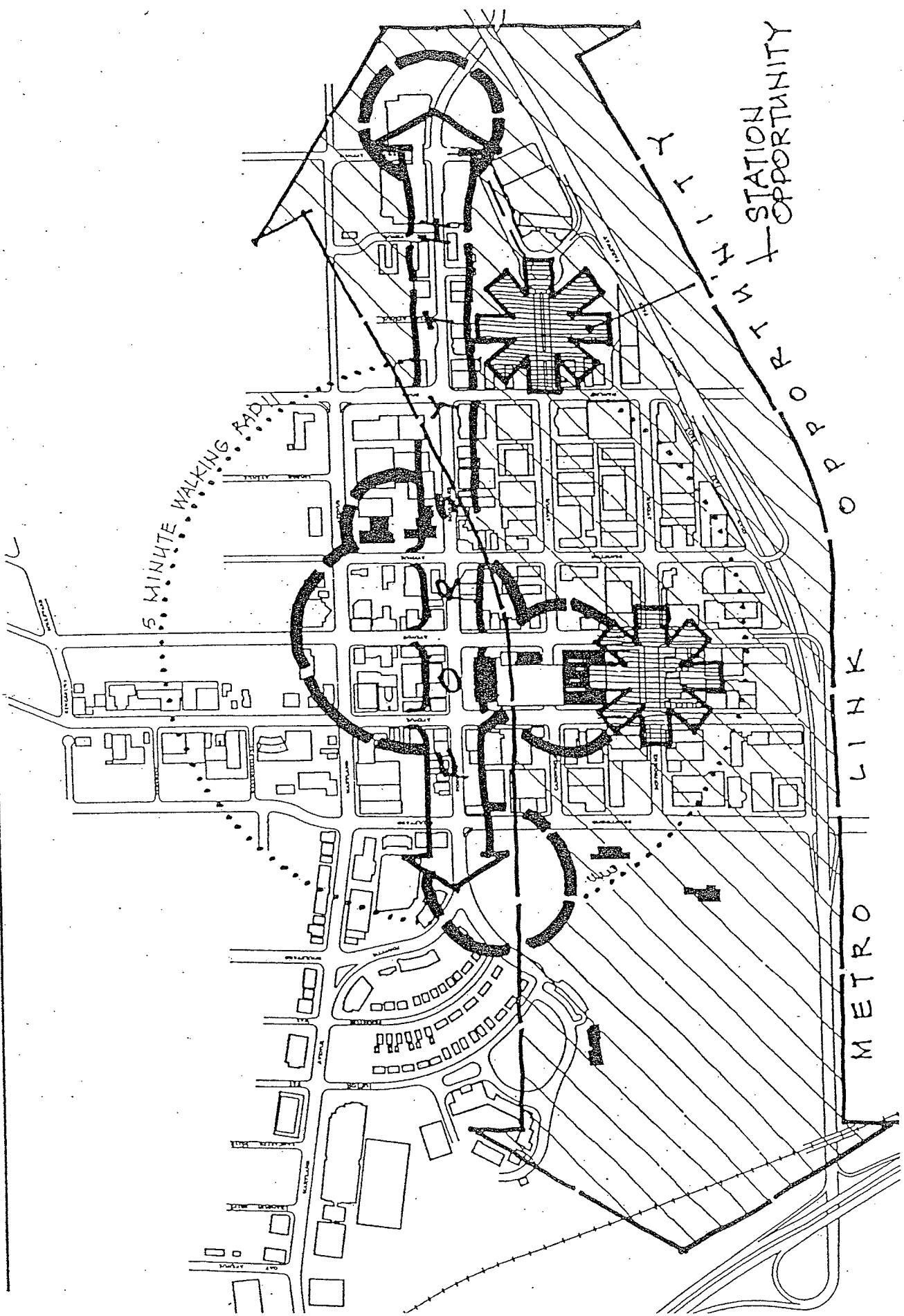
area surrounded by tree-lined walks (the present sidewalk areas) and a tree covered plaza paralleling Forsyth Boulevard. The plaza is envisioned as an area for events and gatherings. The park area is envisioned as having animated edges (sidewalks and plazas), becoming a more passive green space as one moves towards the park interior.

*Government Center Redevelopment Opportunity.* A possible scenario for a long-term redevelopment of the St. Louis County Government Center could be as follows. **Phase One** would include landscape improvements to the area in front of the Old County Building. The **Second Phase** would occur after development of the new Justice Center and retirement of the Old County Building. A new civic green to serve the City and County would be implemented along with streetscape improvement on adjoining roadways. The present plaza could link with the proposed green. It would be possible at this point or at a later date to develop a below grade parking garage under the proposed park. A **third phase** would be development of a new Administration structure which would be located in the present plaza area. At this time a smaller, central plaza area would be created which would provide visual access from the Courts Building to the proposed green area and Forsyth Boulevard. A **fourth phase** would redevelop the present Administration Building, possibly to mirror the second phase Administration Building proposed over the present plaza area. This proposal for redevelopment of the Government Complex suits the needs of the City and County by creating a more extroverted development which would link with the Forsyth Boulevard proposal and integrate itself into the retail core area. A further opportunity for redevelopment of the complex is created when the MetroLink light rail transit line and the location of a light rail station within this complex are considered. All these scenarios point to the need for a City/County planning partnership in redevelopment of the present County Government Center and the surrounding area.

#### 2.2.4 MetroLink

The importance of MetroLink to the City of Clayton's long-term development cannot be overemphasized. The connection to Downtown St. Louis and the airport are essential for Clayton to remain a premier corporate center. The City needs to be proactive in promoting MetroLink and begin planning for it now.





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In the past the success of our urban centers was determined by whether or not they were located on major transportation corridors. The future will be no different and our successful urban centers will also have to be transportation hubs. The development of light rail transit lines and stations will be catalysts for redevelopment of future urban centers.

*Concept.* The MetroLink rail line should be located within the CBD and one or possibly two stations should be located within the CBD. A City/County partnership should be developed to explore alignment alternatives and feasibility of stations locations. Relatedly, one of these stations should be built in association with an upgraded and effective Bi-State bus transfer station.

*Urban Design.* The location of a light rail line within the Clayton CBD will have a major impact on the community. The rail line can be a catalyst for redevelopment, it can create new traffic patterns -- both pedestrian and vehicular, and it can introduce a new mix of uses that would not otherwise exist in the CBD. The line and station location must not be an intrusion. With good planning and coordination they can foster an even greater level of vitality and ambiance in the CBD. The rail line and station should appear as if they have always existed in the CBD. The following is a list of suggested development standards for light rail and stations.

- The light rail line should be located within or adjacent to Clayton's CBD.
- The light rail line should be at-grade where possible within the CBD.
- Transit stops (minimum of one, possibly two) should be located within the CBD.
- The transit stops should be integrated into mixed-use centers with provision for public parking garages.
- Pedestrian access and amenities should be integrated within the CBD's public realm infrastructure.
- Locate a new Bi-State bus transfer station in association with one of the CBD light rail stations.

*Location.* There are several potential locations for MetroLink stations within the CBD. One area is in the redevelopment area east of Hanley Road. There is ample room to create a new mixed-use center and public parking facilities within this area. The location of a station at this point would act as a catalyst for the redevelopment area as well as provide direct benefits to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and to the Washington University facilities on the former Famous & Barr site.

Another important location would be part of the St. Louis County Government Center. Redevelopment of the Center could provide for additional public parking and is a central location for all of Clayton's CBD.

### 2.2.5 Residential Development

A final key component of the vision for Clayton's CBD is increased housing in the Central Business District. Quality residential neighborhoods adjacent to the CBD have long been one of the hallmarks for which Clayton is recognized. However, in the Central Business District as defined in the plan, residential development is limited to the two apartment towers and the low-rise condominium project on Brentwood Boulevard, the two-story apartment and condominium buildings in the Tipton/Brighton area, and the three two-to-five-story apartment buildings on north Meramec at Kingsbury.

*Concept.* Additional housing in the Central Business District complements all of the key vision elements and makes good planning and economic sense for a lot of other reasons:

- More housing in the CBD will add to the general level of activity and provide additional animation and street life important to the image of the retail core and other pedestrian environments in the CBD.
- Increased residential density represents an expanded market for the specialty retail, restaurants and other businesses in the CBD.
- The more concentrated residential population created by higher-density CBD housing is more efficiently served by City services such as police, etc. resulting in a lower per capita cost.

- Higher-density CBD housing produces lower impacts on the environment than other types of residential development because of less automobile commuting, more efficient use of utilities, more efficient land use and other factors.
- Additional housing in the Central Business District will increase the City tax base without adding appreciably to the costs of school district services.

The objective should be to offer a variety of housing types in the CBD, each type targeted to the specific expectations of the market segment for which a demand is identified. The land values, limited sites, and urban setting will make higher-density (e.g. 24 dwelling units per acre or more) the most feasible and desirable type of development. Clayton's condominium market has been one of the few sustainable condo markets in the region, though these have tended to be for high-end units. Likewise the recent success of the Claytonian rental apartments on Hanley Road would suggest there remains a market for upper-end rental units though the depth of this market is undoubtedly limited. The perception among several developers is that a somewhat untapped market may exist for moderately priced rental units located in the CBD (say \$600 to \$900 per month).

**Urban Design/Location.** Specific opportunities for additional higher-density CBD residential development are described in section 3.0. However, the areas with the most potential are clearly those which can take advantage of the views and amenities offered by Shaw Park, sites on the east end of the Forsyth Corridor that can capitalize on the availability of vacant land and future greenspace amenities, locations in the Retail/Mixed-Use Core incorporated into the second level of well-conceived mixed-use developments, and sites on the north end of Meramec near Kingsbury that are consistent with the pattern of adjacent residential and campus office development.

## 2.3 OTHER VISION COMPONENTS

The five key vision components described in the preceding section are pivotal to the overall future development plan for the Central Business District. There are, however, several other components necessary to complement and reinforce the vision and plan for Clayton's CBD. These include Target Retail

Businesses, Office Market Strategy, Urban Design Theme, and Parking and Traffic. The role and function that each of these components will play in the vision for the Central Business District is outlined below.

### 2.3.1 Target Retail Businesses

A recurring theme in the vision-building sessions conducted as a part of the plan process was the concept of increasing retail business in all of the business districts, particularly in the CBD and specifically in the Retail Core. The changing nature of retailing and the fierce competition for general merchandise retailing has been described earlier in the Technical Report and is further discussed in the Market Context contained in Appendix B. It is clear that to be successful, a strategy for targeting the right retail businesses into the right locations is essential. Ultimately, market response to the selection, price, level of service, management and entrepreneurial skill will determine any individual retailer's success or failure. However, the ability to attract and retain retail uses that are consistent with the vision for each business area and that complement other stores and uses is important to the community as well as to individual businesses.

Each of Clayton's four business districts should have its own identity and purpose. The Demun business district should continue to serve a combination of neighborhood and specialty retail functions as described in section 3.0. The Hanley/Wydown district will also provide neighborhood service and convenience shopping with some limited dining and service uses for customers from outside the immediate neighborhoods. Clayton Road should serve a much broader specialty retail market with destination businesses dependent on automobile access.

Participants in the visioning sessions suggested many ideas about the types of retail they would like to see in the CBD and in the retail core. These included additional restaurants, multi-screen movie theaters, a bakery and specialty stores offering children's clothing, sporting goods, toys, furniture and home furnishings. None of these ideas are inconsistent with the concept for the Retail Core. However, any of these uses must offer customers something very different from their competition if they are to successfully differentiate themselves and survive and prosper in the retail environment that exists today. In searching for target

retailers for Clayton's CBD, the City's economic development specialists should first build upon the demonstrated successes of existing businesses. These include restaurants, specialty food, galleries, specialty clothing, gifts, and other uses appealing to CBD employees, city residents, visitors and destination shoppers. Uses not currently represented in the Central Business District such as specialty home furnishings, sporting goods, record stores and others offering specialized service or products are also potential targets. The success of the Library Limited in offering an alternative to the national book store chains located in the malls should be demonstrative with regard to these other types of specialty retailers. The CBD's high concentration of daytime workers combined with an affluent and easily accessible residential market are the primary assets that the CBD has to offer such businesses.

Another category that should be considered as target retail businesses are those such as the Gap, Crate & Barrel, Pier One, and the Limited. These do occasionally opt for traditional downtown stores in more urban settings to reach unique markets with both office workers and residential customers having high disposable incomes, in lieu of the typical mall locations. These "hybrid" retail stores look for street-level spaces providing from 7,000 to 15,000 square feet in the core of the retail area. As noted in the Market Context memorandum, such spaces are not easy to find in Clayton's CBD. These types of retail uses can generate considerable activity and are certainly worth pursuing or accommodating if adequate space can be made available in existing or redeveloped buildings.

### 2.3.2 Office Market Strategy

The office market strategy component of the vision for the CBD builds on the concept of the Retail/Mixed Use Core and other plan elements. Clayton's position in the competition for office tenants was described earlier in this section. In order to remain competitive with Downtown St. Louis and the western suburbs, Clayton must offer an office environment that provides something they do not have or must duplicate the features that make them attractive. Clayton cannot replicate the Arch, Busch Stadium or other amenities that differentiate Downtown St. Louis as an attractive office setting. Likewise, Clayton's CBD does not have the available land to construct sprawling campus

office developments with seas of surface parking.

Clayton's strategy should be to create such a special, active pedestrian CBD environment that is attractive to office workers, employers and property owners as well as to the City's residents. Quality-of-life is not a term limited to a residential context. It is equally important to all who spend a large part of their waking lives in an office environment as a means of putting groceries on the table. Employers and property owners recognize this fact and also recognize its impact on rents, property values and vacancy rates. Another feature that can be used to differentiate the Clayton office environment from suburban office developments is the introduction of MetroLink into Clayton's CBD. The advantage of being connected to Downtown St. Louis and the airport would be significant for Clayton offices. A MetroLink line and station could also be the catalyst for redevelopment of selected office sites in Clayton that are currently showing signs of age and deferred maintenance.

### 2.3.3

#### Urban Design Theme

One of the tragedies of more recent development in urban areas across the country is the profusion of generic buildings and environments. We have all visited developments which lack distinction and are visually indistinguishable from development 1,000 miles away. Cities such as Clayton should capitalize on their distinctive geomorphic, historic and social heritage. The City of Clayton and the region have a rich history of parks, neighborhoods and architecture. It is important that the design vocabulary for new development within the CBD capitalize on these resources.

Urban design and architecture can be organized around three elements: design, materials, and color. The residential neighborhoods surrounding Clayton's CBD exhibit a fine array of architecture developed during the Crafts period (1890-1910). The buildings and their settings work well with the climate and geography of the area. Historically, this period represented a time of renaissance for St. Louis and surrounding areas. The design materials and colors used in this period would be an excellent point of departure when considering new development in the CBD.

*Quality.* When considering design and theme it is also important to strive for quality. A city of Clayton's stature requires buildings and environments of distinction. The city should not pattern itself after shopping malls which utilize flamboyance and novelty to gain recognition and are thus condemned to continual re-invention. Clayton should strive for quality and permanence.

Signs likewise reflect the quality and image of our communities and can add to the visual vitality of our urban centers or be a major contributor to its visual chaos. Its primary function is to identify the business, goods and services offered, and contribute to the business image. To successfully achieve these purposes, a sign must be eye-catching without being offensive.

The use of ground signs as an alternative to wall signs is currently allowed in Clayton's sign ordinance. However, additional restrictions are required to ensure the appropriate image. Ground signs should be attached to a singular base creating a monolithic form. The use of visible columns or legs is discouraged. The signs should have height limits and should not be located on any man-made berming or mounds. Ground signs should not exceed 25 square feet in area (sign base not included) The sign should have a maximum height of 5 feet above grade.

#### 2.3.4 Parking and Traffic

Traffic and parking are traditional problems with all urban areas, and Clayton is no exception. The CBD exhibits some traffic congestion at peak hours, but it is quickly abated. Traffic generally moves to and throughout the CBD with minimum difficulty.

Parking difficulties usually focus on convenience: the ability to quickly find parking spaces that have direct access to the destination. Perceptions of inconvenience can be overcome with good signage and enhancement of the pedestrian environment.

It is important to put traffic and parking issues in perspective with the greater needs of a pedestrian-friendly CBD environment. It is all too easy for the pressing needs of automobile traffic and parking to take precedence over the



pedestrian, with the result being a sterile and ultimately blighted urban center. The mission in Clayton should be to avoid this outcome by creating a place where people overcome the obstacles of traffic and parking while maintaining good vehicular access and convenience.

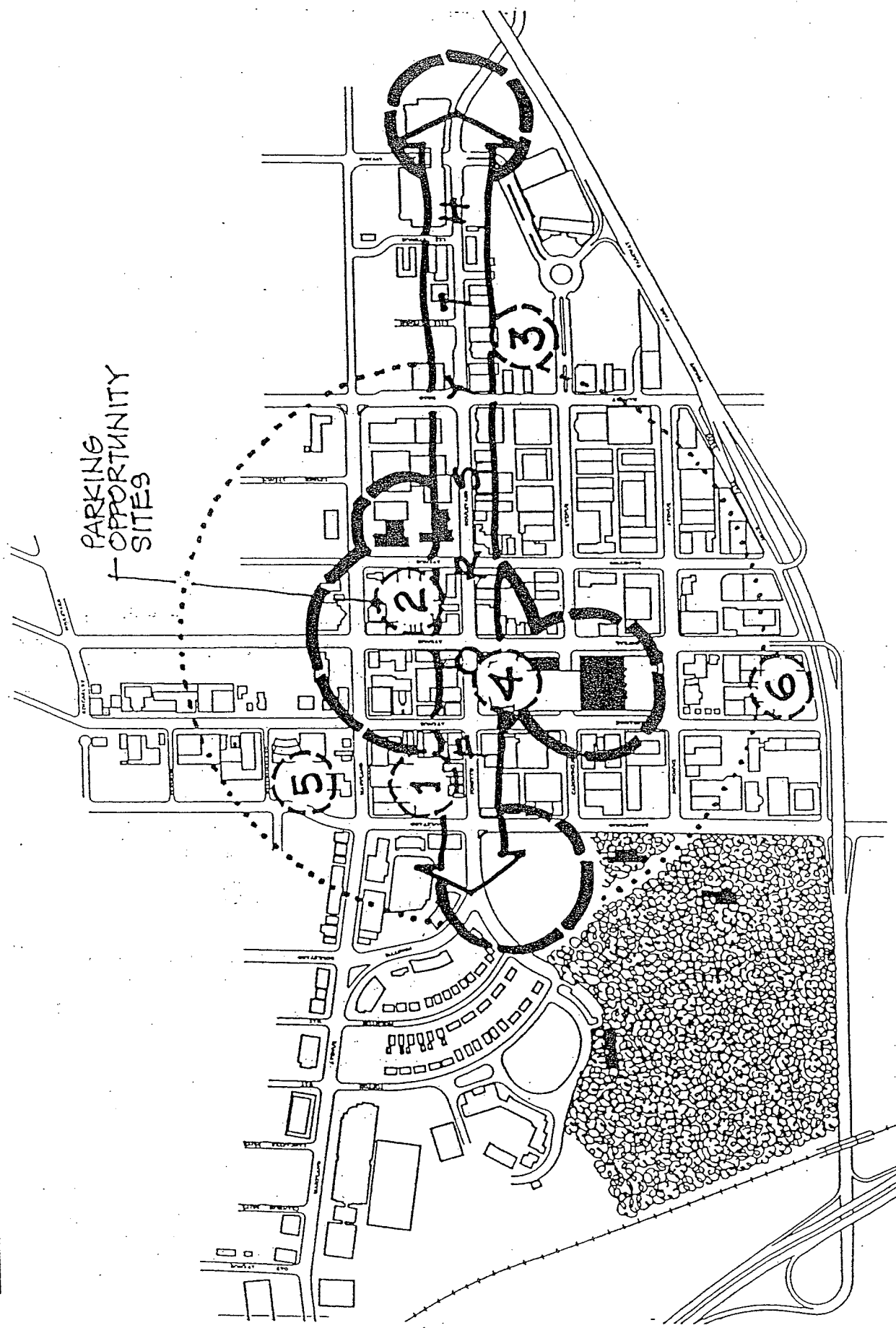
*Traffic.* From a planning standpoint, traffic movement in the CBD is generally efficient and adequate. Individual areas of congestion or deficiencies in safety may occur, but these need to be addressed at a site-by-site implementation level, rather than with policy revisions for the whole CBD.

*Parking.* The perception of convenient parking, especially for the visitor and shopper, is an all important issue in the minds of many merchants in the CBD. However, the present system of on-street parking organized around a structure of prescribed rental periods and a hierarchy of fees is as effective any.

*On-Street Parking.* Where possible, all streets should provide for on-street parking. Parking parallel to the curb is encouraged; angled or perpendicular parking on roadways is not recommended. The few additional parking spaces gained (the number is low because city blocks are too short to make significant accumulative gains), do not justify the safety and aesthetic concerns. Maneuvering backwards into traffic impedes through traffic movement and is difficult and dangerous for motorists and pedestrians alike because of blocked views. Further, angled parking creates the appearance of a parking lot and visually dominates the street, while parallel parking is visually compatible and provides a buffer between pedestrian and moving vehicular traffic.

*Public Parking.* Because of streetscape improvements proposed for Forsyth Boulevard and the accompanying development opportunities (shops, institutions and entertainment) provision for adequate convenient public parking will be essential. These parking reservoirs will need to be easily accessible and close to their destinations, both visually and physically (one block maximum - within 300-500 linear feet).

*Public Parking Opportunities.* As a long - term option for consideration, four garage opportunities have been



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identified, all within a block of Forsyth Boulevard. A fifth site is located north of Maryland Avenue, which could possibly serve the adjoining retail center (3100 block of Maryland Avenue); and a sixth site at the 7900 block of Shaw Park Drive could serve as satellite parking.

Opportunity 1. The surface parking (public lot) now located in the 8000 block of Forsyth Boulevard North is a convenient area which serves the retail core and possibly the County Government Center. A garage could be designed with shallow, ground-level storefront uses to face onto Meramec, Forsyth and Brentwood to expand on the central location and strengthen the retail core. Existing development along Forsyth should be preserved, although alterations of building rears may be required.

Opportunity 2. In the 7800 block north on Forsyth, there is at least a two story grade change between Central and Bemiston. The block is large enough to bury a parking garage and surround it with retail development on the ground levels and support mixed use above. This would be an excellent location to serve the retail core and City Government.

Opportunity 3. Located between Forsyth and Carondelet east of Hanley, this site would be a longer range opportunity. A public garage would be an important incentive to development in this area and would support Forsyth Boulevard as a major pedestrian way. Light rail and a potential station location in this area further strengthens the feasibility of a public parking structure in this location.

Opportunity 4. Under the proposed City/County Green, the site of the present Police and Highway Building, is a long-term parking garage opportunity. This would be coordinated with redevelopment of the County Government Center and their program needs. Development of a public green in this location would provide an opportunity to bury a parking structure which would serve both the Government Center and retail the core.

Opportunity 5. This site (the former Family Chevrolet Dealership) was identified to provide additional parking to serve the Maryland Avenue retail cluster. A portion of this site could be set aside as surface parking or a small structure to serve both the existing retail development along Maryland Avenue and proposed development that would front onto Maryland Avenue. A small public lot exists on the corner. The concept is to develop the Maryland Avenue frontage and transfer the parking to the block interior.

Opportunity 6. The 7900 block of Shaw Park Drive has been identified as a major development opportunity. The City Police Station and public surface parking currently occupy the southern portion of the block. The parking lot serves as satellite parking for the CBD. As the CBD continues to develop, a surface lot and eventually a public garage would be ideally suited for the block. As the block redevelops the lot/garage should be relocated to the interior to allow for full development of the street edges.

MetroLink. An additional consideration when looking at public parking is the potential location of a MetroLink line and station within the CBD. The development of an interim parking lot or deck with expansion potential to accommodate a station and adjoining development is feasible. Two locations; the east end opportunity on Carondelet (#3) and the redevelopment of the County Government Center (#4) are identified as opportunities for both a light rail station and public parking.