

(C) THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Traffic and Parking Characteristics

Within the past few years, most American cities have awakened to the seriousness of the traffic and parking problem in the central business district. Decentralization of business has been under way for some time. Adequate off-street parking facilities and improved traffic circulation are needed to help stabilize existing values and to stimulate development in Utica's central business district.

Customers in a trading center are pedestrians. They may arrive over express highways or wide arterial streets, but adequate downtown terminal parking space is essential if these customers are to continue trading in the area. City and state governments have accepted as a public responsibility the provision of adequate streets. It is only recently, however, that they have begun to recognize as a public responsibility the provision of adequate terminal parking facilities.

This portion of the Major Street study is concerned with movement of vehicular traffic on the streets of the central business district, and with development of a plan for provision of adequate parking facilities.

Street Pattern.

The dominant thoroughfare in Utica's central business district is Genesee Street. There are only five street crossings over Genesee Street in the business district. Streets on the east side of Genesee intersect at about a right angle. Hotel, Seneca and Washington Streets join Genesee on the west at acute angles and create intersections which are very hazardous both for pedestrians and automobiles.

Access to the central business district from the North is limited to North Genesee Street. Access from the west is good over all streets as far south as Columbia, but is poor between Columbia and Court Streets. Access is good from the

east between Main and Elizabeth Streets, but is poor between Elizabeth and Hopper Streets.

Streets in the central business district are generally 66 feet in width, which allows at best only two traffic and two parking lanes. Some important streets are even narrower, such as Columbia, Elizabeth to Charlotte, and Hopper. A few have generous widths, such as Genesee, Broad, Oriskany and Park.

Alleys are generally lacking, which imposes upon the streets the extra burden of merchandise loading and unloading.

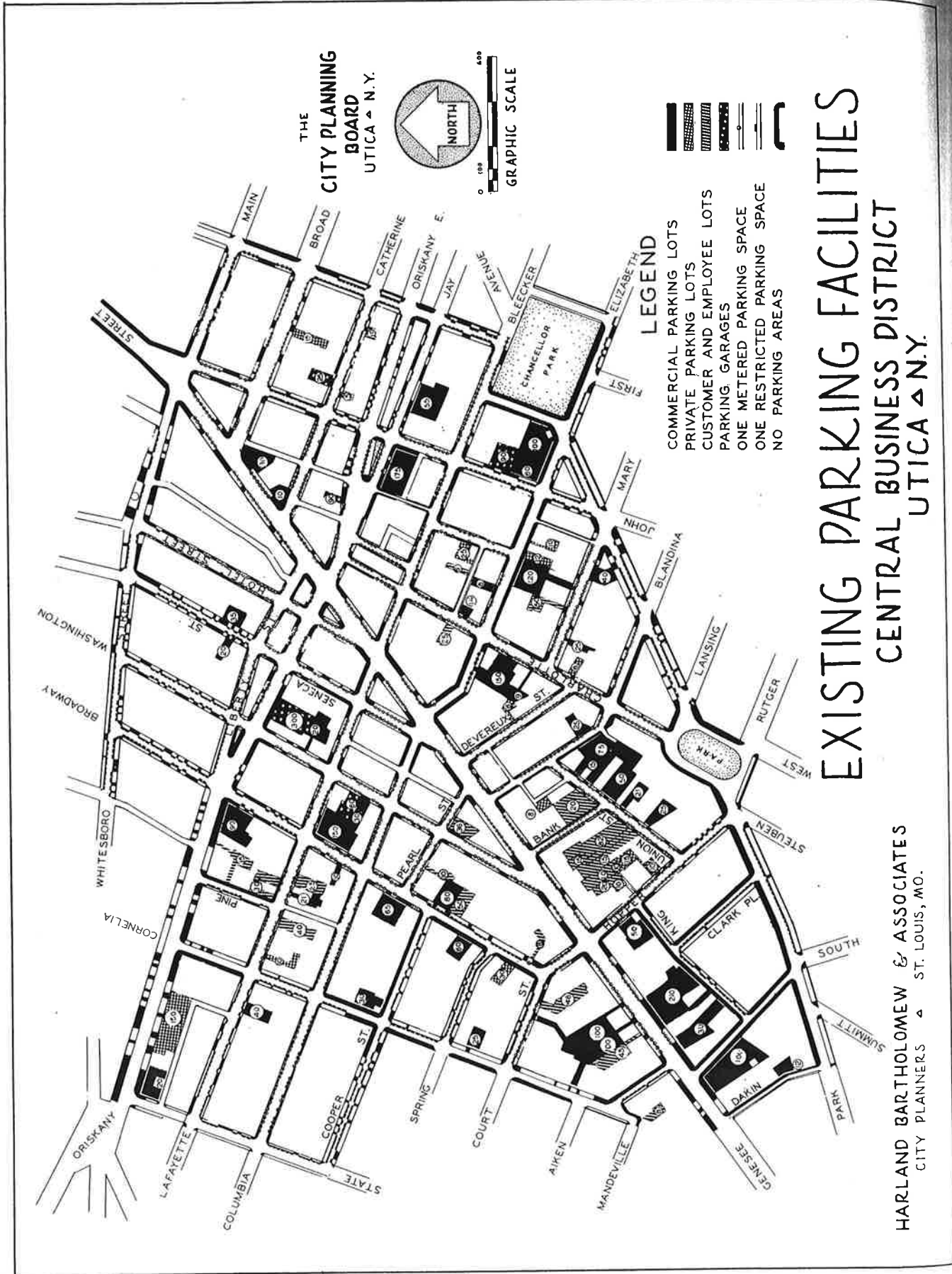
Parking Characteristics.

It is interesting and significant to analyze the intensity of use of available curb parking spaces in the central business district. Experience in many cities has shown that the distance a person is willing to walk depends upon the length of time a transaction will take and the amount of the parking fee. Parkers can be classified in three main categories, based upon the length of time for which parking space is desired.

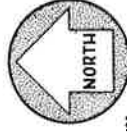
The Short-Time Parker wants parking space only for sufficient time to deposit or pick up a parcel or passengers, to pay a bill, to mail a letter, or to perform some similar errand. The time required is generally 20 minutes or less. Generally, short-time parkers do not like to park more than 500 feet from their destination.

Shopping Parkers include those persons who have occasion to park for several hours, including salesmen and repairmen as well as shoppers and customers. Various surveys have determined that 1,000 feet is the maximum distance which an average person will walk from a parking place to his destination, and that the walking distance varies with the length of time for which parking is desired.

It is characteristic that while there may be serious parking congestion in the concentrated retail area, curb parking and off-street spaces a few blocks away may be sparsely used. This condition was found to exist in Utica.



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GRAPHIC SCALE

LEGEND

- COMMERCIAL PARKING LOTS
- PRIVATE PARKING LOTS
- CUSTOMER AND EMPLOYEE LOTS
- PARKING GARAGES
- ONE METERED PARKING SPACE
- ONE RESTRICTED PARKING SPACE
- NO PARKING AREAS

EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
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The Long-Time Parker will walk a greater distance to his destination than other types of parkers. This group includes business men and employees who drive their private cars to work.

Recreational Parkers are a special class who generally create a concentrated parking load, but at a later time than the shopping peaks. The recreational parking peak ordinarily occurs after 7:30 P.M.

Existing Parking Facilities

Existing parking facilities in the central business district of Utica are shown on Plate number 20. The following list gives a breakdown of existing parking facilities in the central business district:

<u>Curb Parking</u>		<u>Off-Street Parking</u>	
Meter zones	1,180	Commercial lots	2,305
One hour zones	651	Private lots (clubs, etc.)	291
Two-Hour zones	105	Customer-employee	603
Half-hour zones	3	Parking garages	565
No time zones	166		
Total curb parking space	2,105	Total off-street spaces	3,764

Total parking spaces in central business district - 5,869

Curb Parking.

Maximum use must be made of curb space for parking. The central business district in Utica includes a total of 77,125 lineal feet of curb - almost fifteen miles. Of this total, 43,219 lineal feet (56 per cent) are assigned for parking spaces and 33,906 lineal feet are restricted against parking. Curb space where parking is prohibited is restricted for such uses as bus loading zones, taxi stands, truck zones, fire lanes and crosswalks.

Curb Parking Survey.

The results of a recent parking survey are shown following:

<u>Total Curb Parking Spaces Available</u>		<u>Total Curb Parking Spaces in Use</u>			
		A.M.	%	P.M.	%
Meters	1,180	800	67.8	768	65.2
Hour Zone	651	318	49.0	343	52.7
Two-hour Zone	105	53	51.7	58	55.3
No limit	<u>166</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>56.7</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>45.8</u>
Total	2,102	1,267	60.3(Av)	1,245	59.2(Av)
Vehicles Parked in Restricted Zone		143		146	

Off-Street Parking.

As has been previously stated, there are 3,764 off-street parking spaces in the central business district. Only one small lot, having a capacity of 25 cars for employees is located within the four blocks surrounding the "Busy Corner". Commercial lots are 650 or more feet away from the "Busy Corner".

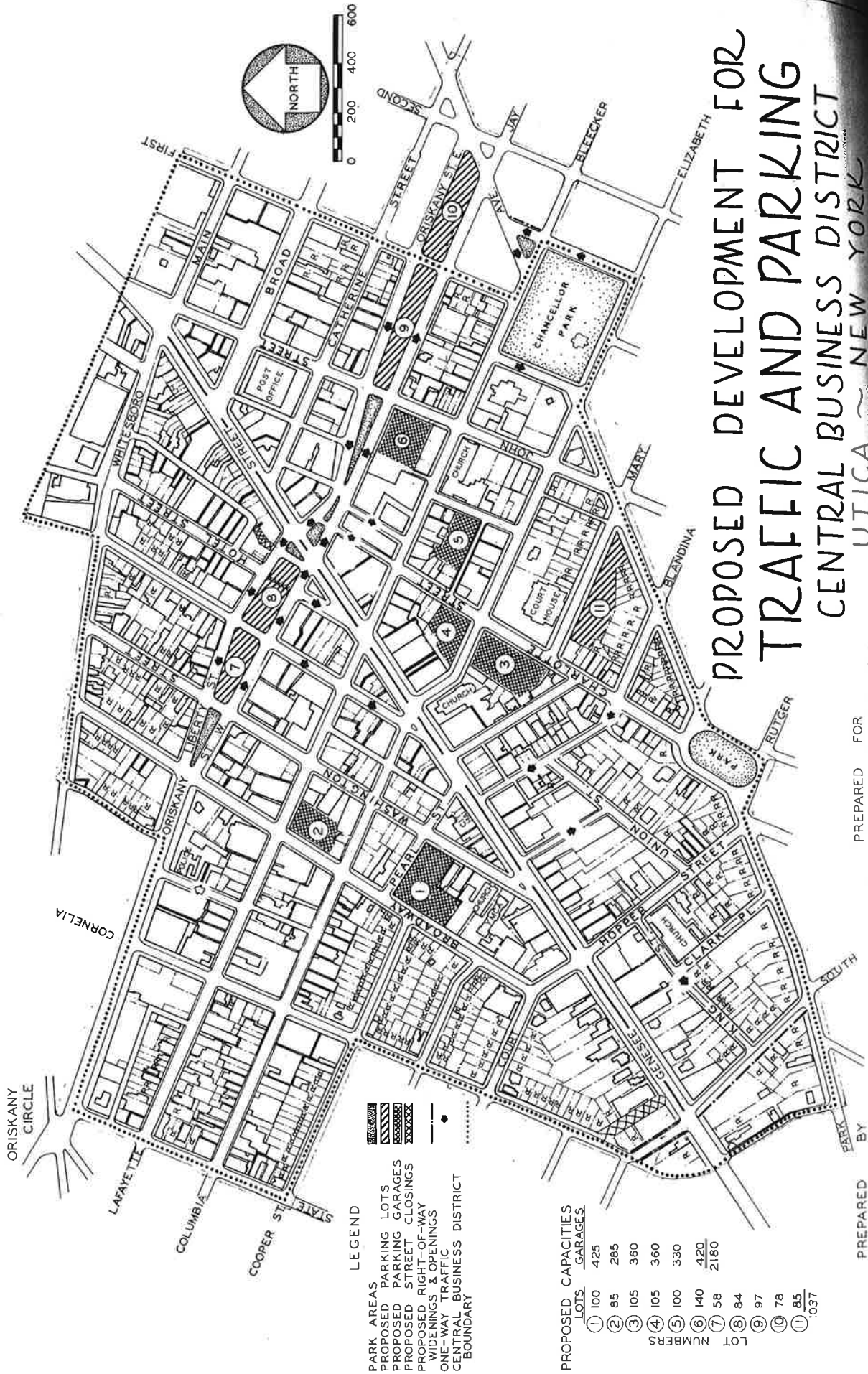
Conclusions.

Several conclusions can be drawn from analysis of the facts presented above regarding present traffic and parking facilities in Utica's central business district.

1. There is an active demand for parking space adjacent to the "Busy Corner" and in the more intensively developed portions of the commercial area. The demand cannot be met with curb parking, and existing structural coverage limits the available sites for off-street parking lots or garages.

2. Off-street parking lots are privately owned and operated. They are, therefore, essentially temporary facilities, and may be developed at any time for commercial or other intensive use. In that event, the parking service which they now provide for the congested area would be lost and the new structure would itself increase the need for parking space.

3. There is a gradual movement of commercial establishments southward on Genesee Street. This movement is encouraged by the greater availability and convenience of off-street parking areas. The trend of business southward has serious results in depressing values in the lower Genesee Street district.



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOR TRAFFIC AND PARKING CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT UTICA ~ NEW YORK

LEGEND

- PARK AREAS
- PROPOSED PARKING LOTS
- PROPOSED PARKING GARAGES
- PROPOSED STREET CLOSINGS
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- WIDENINGS & OPENINGS
- ONE-WAY TRAFFIC
- CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BOUNDARY

PROPOSED CAPACITIES

LOTS	CAPACITIES
1	100
2	85
3	105
4	105
5	100
6	140
7	58
8	84
9	97
10	78
11	85
1037	

GARAGES

LOTS	CAPACITIES
1	425
2	285
3	360
4	360
5	330
6	420
7	2180

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Furthermore, the opportunities for continuation of the southward trend are limited by the various institutions immediately adjacent to the present central business district.

4. The street pattern in the central business district is irregular and flow of traffic between the areas east and west of Genesee Street is difficult and hazardous. It is no mere coincidence that intersections in the portion of Genesee Street in the central business district have been included in the annual ten worst corner accident list 13 times during the past five years.

Proposed Traffic Plan

Some of Utica's most serious traffic and safety problems in the central business district have their origin in the irregular street pattern. Some streets are too narrow for the parking and traffic loads imposed upon them. These and other traffic and parking problems in Utica's central business district are shown on Plate number 21.

Genesee Street is the backbone of the street system. Recommendations have been made previously for channeling traffic movement and promoting pedestrian safety on Genesee Street by installation of a safety island through the center of the street.

The peak-hour of traffic generated by shoppers occurs in the early afternoon. At the evening peak hour when office and store employees are leaving the central business district, serious congestion occurs. Consideration must be given at an early date to elimination of curb parking during the rush hour in the congested area so that buses may use the parking lane for loading.

Hotel Street has recently been made a one-way street for southbound traffic between Oriskany, West and Genesee Street near the Busy Corner. This restriction prevents left turns from Genesee across automobile and pedestrian traffic, but allows southbound Hotel Street traffic to merge with southbound Genesee Street traffic. This regulation should be continued.

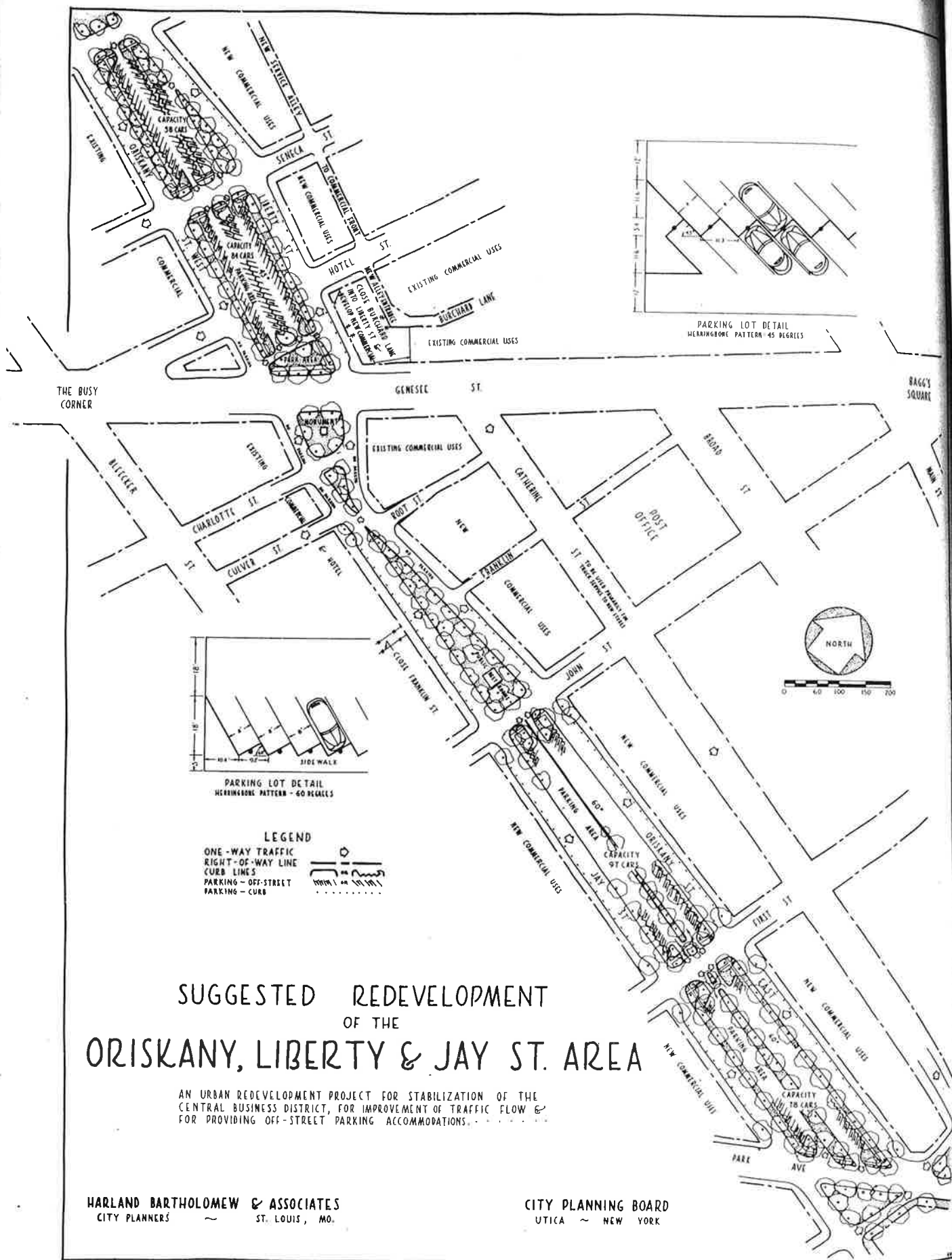
The Seneca Street intersection with Genesee Street presents hazards similar to those of Hotel Street. This is a 5-point intersection. The volume of traffic and the number of pedestrians are large. Left turns from Genesee Street into Seneca or Columbia Streets involve many potential collision points and hazards to pedestrians. It is recommended, therefore, that only southbound traffic use Seneca Street between Oriskany Street, West and Genesee Street, thus providing for merging of traffic, but eliminating crossing traffic.

Whitesboro, Main and State Streets and Park Avenue have previously been described as distributor streets. Their purpose is to enable traffic to move around the congested area until reaching the street nearest the destination. Whitesboro and Main Streets provide at Baggs Square one of few connections across Genesee Street. This intersection needs redesign as shown by the fact that Baggs Square is included three out of the last five years in the "ten worst corners" list.

Bleecker, Lafayette and Elizabeth-Columbia are street pairs which must be considered together as important east-west commercial streets. Each of these streets is 66 feet wide and, therefore, wide enough for 38-foot pavements and 14-foot sidewalks with the following exceptions. Elizabeth Street in the one block between Genesee and Charlotte Streets is only 60 feet wide; and Columbia varies from 50 feet at Genesee to about 62 feet at Broadway, and 66 feet at Cornelia.

Due to the widths of 60 feet or less in Elizabeth and Columbia Streets near Genesee, and the high cost of increasing this width, Columbia and Elizabeth Streets should eventually carry only east-bound traffic, and Bleecker and Lafayette Streets should eventually carry only west-bound traffic in the central business district.

The one-way traffic movements described above may be avoided during the next few years if all curb parking is eliminated on the narrow street sections described above; and if buses are provided ample curb space for loading and un-



SUGGESTED REDEVELOPMENT OF THE ORISKANY, LIBERTY & JAY ST. AREA

AN URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR STABILIZATION OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, FOR IMPROVEMENT OF TRAFFIC FLOW & FOR PROVIDING OFF-STREET PARKING ACCOMMODATIONS.

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loading, and are required to use it properly.

Devereux Street has only a 50-foot right-of-way. It can carry two lanes of traffic and one parking lane on a 28-foot pavement by limiting the sidewalks to 11 feet.

Blandina Street is only 40 feet wide between Genesee and Charlotte Streets. Bank Place is only 35 feet wide. These streets are too narrow for two-way traffic and should be restricted to one-way use. It is suggested that Bank Place continue to carry only east-bound traffic, but that the direction on Blandina Street be reversed to carry only west-bound traffic.

Rutger, Hopper and Court Streets constitute an important crosstown major street serving the upper Genesee end of the central business district. The pavement width recommended for these streets is generally 38 feet for two traffic and two parking lanes. Due to the volume of bus and other traffic using the Court Street connection between Genesee Street and Broadway, and Hopper Street east of Genesee, these streets should be opened for four lanes of traffic by eliminating curb parking.

The busy South Street shopping area lacks an adequate outlet to Genesee Street. It is recommended that the street be widened to 66 feet west of Park Avenue to conform with the width east of Park.

Oriskany Street, one of Utica's arterial streets from the west, crosses Genesee and terminates at Park Avenue. Liberty Street branches from Oriskany-West, and through its four block length lies not more than 77 feet north of Oriskany. These two streets provide duplicate street services at the expense of additional street costs, uneconomical structures in the narrow blocks, and an extra one-sided intersection with Genesee Street. Jay, Oriskany-East, and Catherine Streets also provide duplicate services, and the buildings between them from John Street and Park Avenue are generally uneconomical.

Plate number 22 shows a suggested redevelopment plan for the Oriskany, Liberty and Jay street area. This plan is

based upon the need for reduction of duplicate streets, the problem of ingress to and egress from Liberty Street at Genesee, the need for off-street parking space near the congested area, and the necessity of taking definite action to redevelop this old, depressed portion of the city.

It is recommended, therefore, that, starting at Broadway, Oriskany Street West carry only eastbound traffic, and that Liberty Street carry only westbound traffic. It is also recommended that between Genesee Street and Park Avenue, Jay Street carry only eastbound traffic, and that Oriskany Street East carry only westbound traffic.

Oriskany Street West has an 86-foot right-of-way between Washington and Genesee Streets, and the pavement width is 54 feet. Liberty Street has a 66-foot right-of-way and a pavement width of 45 feet. A similar condition prevails on Oriskany Street East and Jay Street, where Oriskany has a right-of-way of 79 feet and a 54-foot pavement; and Jay Street has a right-of-way of 66 feet and a pavement width of 40 feet. It is apparent, therefore, that rights-of-way of 152 and 145 feet, and pavement widths of 99 and 94 feet provide more than ample street services for these frontages, including the narrow islands between the streets.

The proposed development is designed to speed traffic movement on Genesee and reduce hazards by eliminating left turns from Genesee Street. Turning movements would be accomplished by making a right turn off Genesee, circling the island, and crossing Genesee on the green light for Oriskany Street.

Proposed Parking Plan

Reduction in Curb Parking Spaces.

Analysis of street requirements for better traffic movement shows that as improvements are made there will be a reduction of existing curb parking spaces. This may amount to a loss of several hundred of the present 2,105 curb spaces in the central business district.

Parking Requirements.

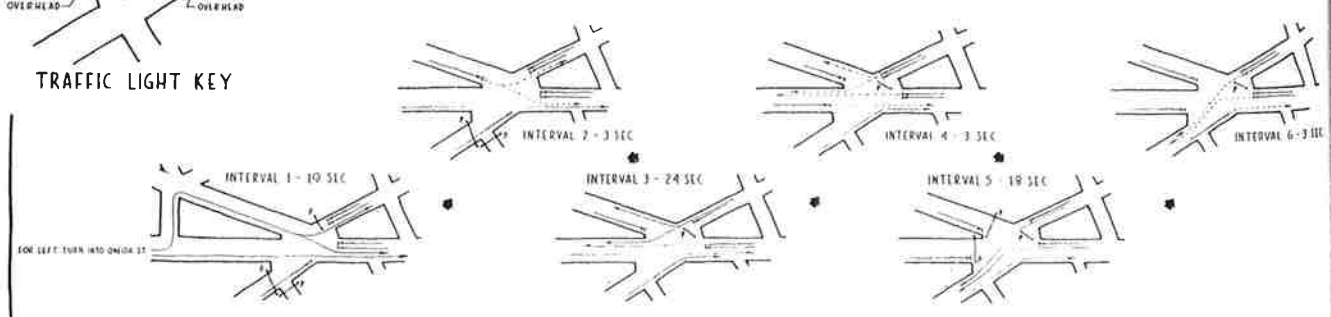
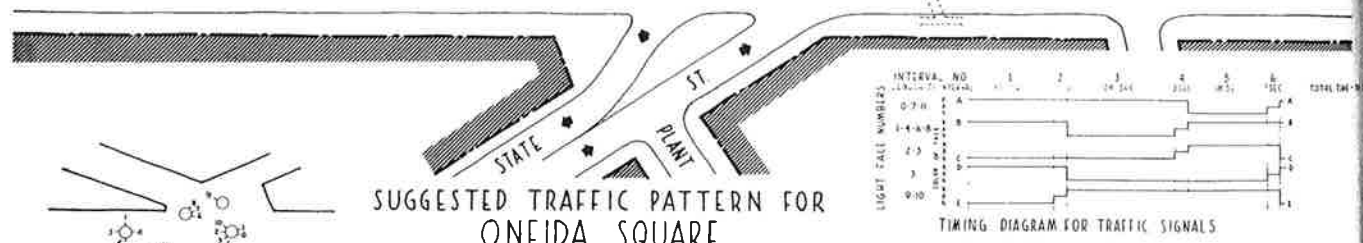
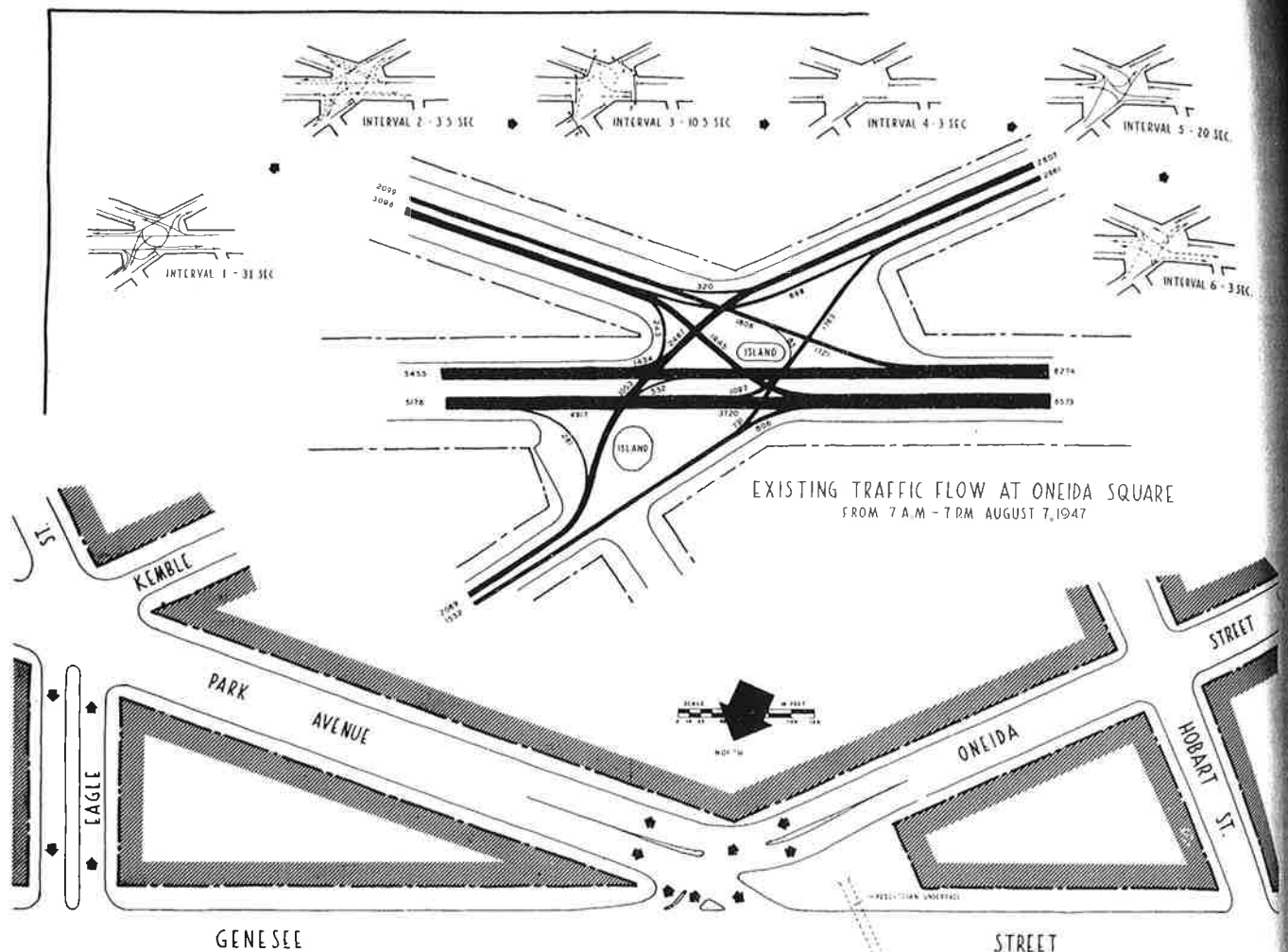
As has been shown previously, there are 2,105 curb parking spaces in the central business district, and 3,764 off-street parking spaces. On the day of the parking survey, 1,408 cars were parked at the curb in the morning (including 143 in zones restricted against parking), and 1,391 in the afternoon, (including 146 parked in restricted zones). At the same time, there were 1,791 off-street parking spaces occupied in the morning, and 1,828 off-street spaces occupied in the afternoon. There were, therefore, 3,199 cars parked in Utica's central business district in the morning, and 3,219 in the afternoon.

Assuming a present average daily parking load of 3,300 cars and a general increase of 50 per cent in automobile usage by 1970, the demand at that time would be to park approximately 5,000 cars at one time in the central business district. Assuming also that there will be an overall reduction of curb parking to 1,750 spaces, and that curb parking spaces will continue to be about 60 per cent occupied, the number of cars parked at the curb would be 1,050. The number of cars to be parked off-the-street would be about 4,000. The parking surveys show about 1,800 cars now parked off-the-street. Allowing for 2,000 cars to continue parking in private lots in the future, there will be a need for 2,000 additional off-street parking spaces in the central business district by 1970.

Off-Street Parking Recommendations.

It is recommended that certain off-street parking facilities within the congested business area be acquired, developed and operated under municipal control. These facilities are shown on Plate number 21, and consist of ten parking areas, five of which are proposed to be developed progressively into multi-level parking garage structures.

The proposed Oriskany Plaza development, which includes four of the ten proposed parking areas is an important feature of the redevelopment of Oriskany, Liberty and Jay Streets. The development would provide some 317 off-street parking spaces, and 138 spaces along the new commercial



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frontage; or a total of 455 proposed spaces. There would be a gain, therefore, of 255 parking spaces .

The proposed Oriskany Plaza development, plus lot Number 6, will provide off-street parking space for 400 cars. This leaves a balance of 1,600 of the estimated 2,000 necessary off-street parking spaces to be provided on the five remaining areas shown on the plan.

It is proposed that these five areas, lots numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, be acquired immediately. They should then be developed progressively from ground-level parking lots to multi-level parking structures as the need increases. Initial and ultimate development of each of these areas will depend upon the sequence of acquisition and construction of any or all of the others, and, for this reason, no recommendation is made herein to prescribe any definite order of procedure.

Oneida Square Traffic.

Special studies were made of traffic conditions at Oneida Square and a plan was prepared to alleviate the congestion and hazardous conditions existing at the intersection. These studies are shown on Plate number 23.

Proposed Traffic Pattern.

In spite of the success of the present system of traffic control in reducing accidents at Oneida Square during recent months, the potential hazards of crossing and merging traffic are great. A suggested traffic pattern, shown on Plate number 23, has been designed to eliminate all crossing of traffic lanes during any one interval, to reduce to a minimum the locations where different streams of traffic merge, and to provide the greatest possible safety for pedestrians. The sketches at the bottom of Plate number 23 show the proposed movements during different light intervals.

One of the essential features of this traffic pattern is a pedestrian underpass between the west and east sides of Genesee Street at the south side of Oneida Square. The underpass appears to be feasible so far as sub-surface utilities

20 SEC

VAL 6 - 3 SEC



TOTAL TIME

INTERVAL 6 - 3 SEC

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are concerned. It has the great advantage of completely separating pedestrians from automobiles at this important Oneida Square traffic artery while providing for continuous pedestrian movements.