

(A) RESIDENTIAL QUALITY

Practical standards have been developed in recent years for objective measurement of the quality of existing residential areas. Four factors which are considered to be indicative of residential quality in Utica are Age, Density, Rental Value and Home Ownership.

These four factors do not individually indicate the quality of living conditions which prevail. The coincidence of age, density, rental value and owner-occupancy, however, indicates residential quality. They also reflect neighborhood conditions such as congestion, noise, smoke, fumes, odors, and other hazards due to industrial development and modern traffic; and lack of maintenance which ensues in the shift from owner-occupancy to tenancy.

Age of Dwellings.

The age of dwellings is of great importance in measuring the quality of residential areas. Many old dwellings are well built, have been carefully maintained, are provided with adequate sanitary facilities, and good neighborhood conditions prevail. It is true, however, that age of dwellings is one of the important factors in defining the quality of a residential area.

For this analysis, the dwellings in each block are classified by the percentage in certain age groups as shown on Plate number 33.

Addition of the number of blocks in each group shows that the dwellings in 231 blocks fall in the "very old" group; that dwellings in 264 blocks fall in the "old" group; that dwellings in 185 blocks fall in the "medium" age group; and that dwellings in only 54 blocks fall in the two "new" groups where building occurred since 1930.

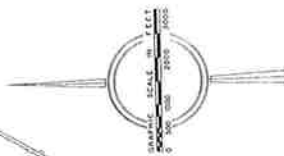
Density of Residential Development.

The density of development is another important index of the quality of residential areas. Nine different density groups are indicated on Plate number 34.

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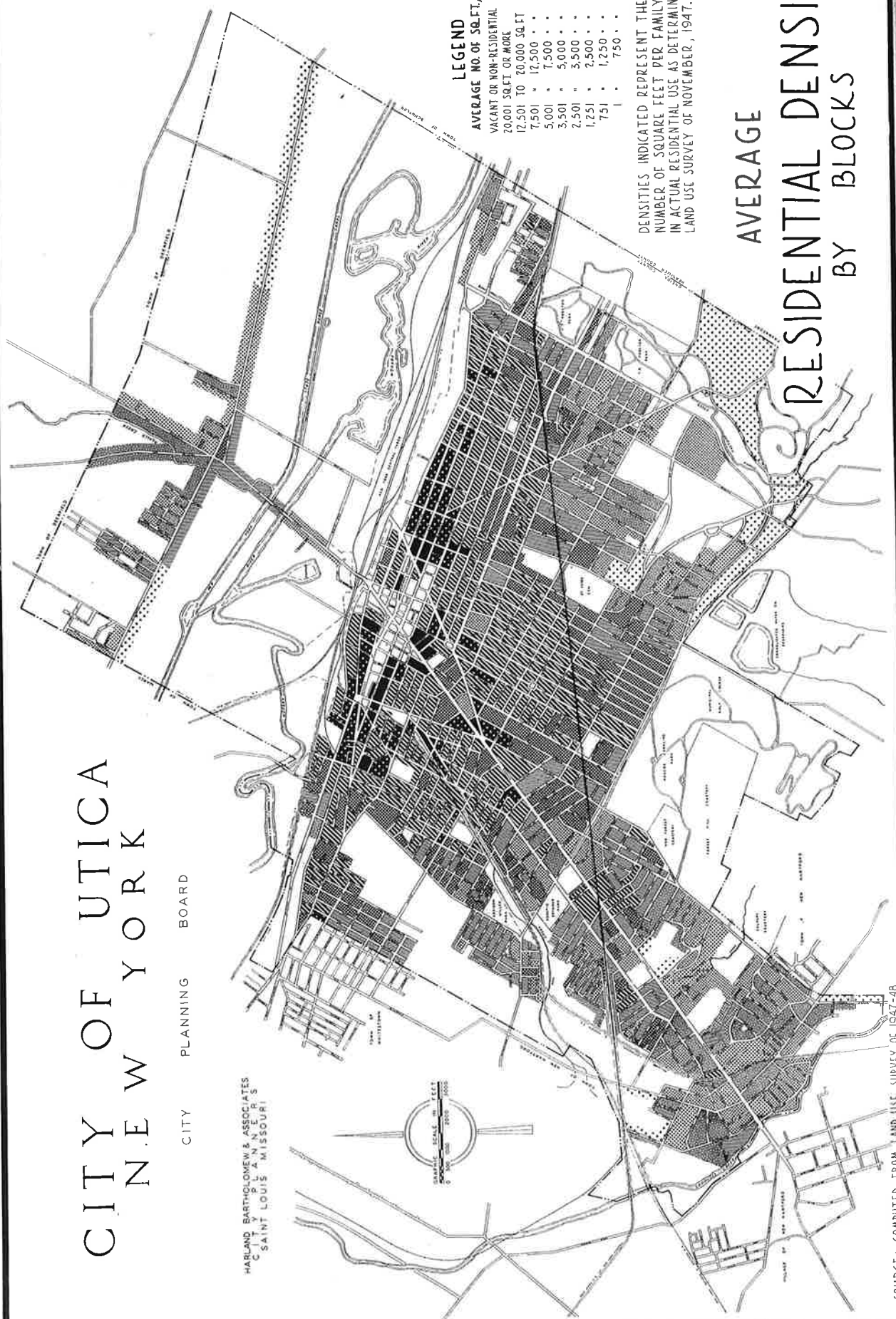


LEGEND

AVERAGE NO. OF SQ. FT./FAMILY
VACANT OR NON-RESIDENTIAL
20,001 SQ. FT. OR MORE
12,501 TO 20,000 SQ. FT.
7,501 TO 12,500
5,001 TO 7,500
3,501 TO 5,000
2,501 TO 3,500
1,251 TO 2,500
751 TO 1,250
1

DENSITIES INDICATED REPRESENT THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF SQUARE FEET PER FAMILY PER BLOCK IN ACTUAL RESIDENTIAL USE AS DETERMINED BY THE LAND USE SURVEY OF NOVEMBER, 1947.

AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL DENSITY BY BLOCKS



SOURCE: COMPUTED FROM LAND USE SURVEY OF 1947-48

The greatest densities occur between Broad and Elizabeth Streets in the vicinity of Park Avenue and Mohawk Street; in the Columbia, Lafayette and Oriskany Street West section, along Lincoln Avenue and in the vicinity of Oneida Square.

Approximately 3,600 persons live in 39 blocks where the area per family is less than 750 square feet. Over 4,000 persons live in 23 blocks where the area is 750 to 1,000 square feet per family. Thus, there are 7,600 persons living in 62 blocks where the average residential area is less than 1,000 square feet per family.

Approximately 15,000 Uticans live in residential density conditions of 1,000 to 1,500 square feet per family.

Forty thousand persons live in 214 blocks where the average area per family is between 1,500 and 2,500 square feet.

Twenty thousand persons live in 108 blocks where the average density per family is between 2,500 and 3,500 square feet.

Twelve thousand persons live in 139 blocks where the average density per family is between 3,500 and 5,000 square feet.

Seven thousand persons live in 93 blocks where the average density per family is between 5,000 and 7,500 square feet.

The average density per family in the other 89 residential blocks is in excess of 7,500 square feet. Only 5,600 Uticans live under these more generous conditions.

Rentals.

Rentals are useful indices of variations in residential quality. Differences in rent are not only a ready measure of differences in structural quality and services, but also of neighborhood influences, of light and air, and many intangible social factors which influence the relative desirability of different areas for residential uses.

Almost invariably, very low rent prevails in areas where basic facilities are not provided and where neighborhood conditions are detrimental to the health, safety, morality and welfare of the residents. Above this level of very low

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AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL RENTALS BY BLOCKS 1940

SOURCE : U.S. CENSUS OF HOUSING, 1940

rent, there is progressive improvement in structural conditions, privacy, density and neighborhood factors until a level is reached where basic facilities are provided and high rentals reflect degrees of extra services, luxury and prestige.

Plate Number 35 shows the average residential rentals, by blocks, prevailing in Utica in 1940. These rentals may seem out-of-date for use in 1948 studies. They are, however, the only comprehensive data available. In addition, rent control has been in effect since 1942, and there has been no general rent increase in Utica since that time. Regardless of individual increases which have occurred, the city-wide pattern of rental values would seem to be similar to the pattern of 1940.

It is significant to analyze the extent and distribution of these rental groups.

Seventy four of the city's 791 blocks, with a population of some 12,000 persons, are included in the very low rent group.

More than half of Utica's developed residential area (431 blocks) was blanketed by dwellings renting in 1940 for between \$15 to \$30. Some 63,000 persons live in these 431 blocks.

The rental group from \$30 to \$50 per month in 1940 included 206 blocks, in which 27,000 persons now live.

Seventy nine blocks in Utica had average rentals per family of over \$50 per month. The population living in these blocks is about 5,000 persons.

In 1940 the average monthly contract or estimated rent in Utica was \$26.44 per month.

Owner-Occupancy

The extent of owner or tenant occupancy in a city or neighborhood is a significant factor in determining the quality of the residential areas.

The 1940 census of Housing shows that 31.7 per cent of the city's dwelling units were owner-occupied. Home ownership increased to 37.2 per cent by 1948, and the pattern of owner-occupancy is shown on Plate Number 36.

In 40 of Utica's 791 residential blocks less than 10 per cent of the homes are owner-occupied, and in 161 blocks less than 25 per cent are owner-occupied.

In 304 blocks, or 38 per cent of the residential blocks, between 25 and 50 per cent of the homes are owner-occupied.

Quality of Residential Areas

In order to determine the quality of each residential block in Utica, numerical values or deficiency scores are used to indicate different degrees of age, density, rental value and owner-occupancy. The sum of these values for each block indicates the residential quality, as shown on Plate Number 37.

For example, those blocks where the dwellings are new, where the density is low, where rental values and percentages of owner-occupancy are high, have no deficiency score and are stable residential areas. Conversely, those blocks where the dwellings are old, where the density is high, and where rental values and the percentage of owner-occupancy are low, have high deficiency scores and are blighted residential areas. A block of new apartments, having a density which conforms with the multiple-family district regulations of the proposed zoning ordinance, and having high rental values but a low percentage of owner-occupancy, would have a comparatively low deficiency score. The block would show as a good residential block, but not as high in quality as an area of new, single-family, owner-occupied homes.

There are 791 residential blocks in Utica. Fifty-four of these blocks are Blighted residential areas; 336 blocks are Substandard, 247 blocks are suitable for Conservation, and 154 blocks are Stable.

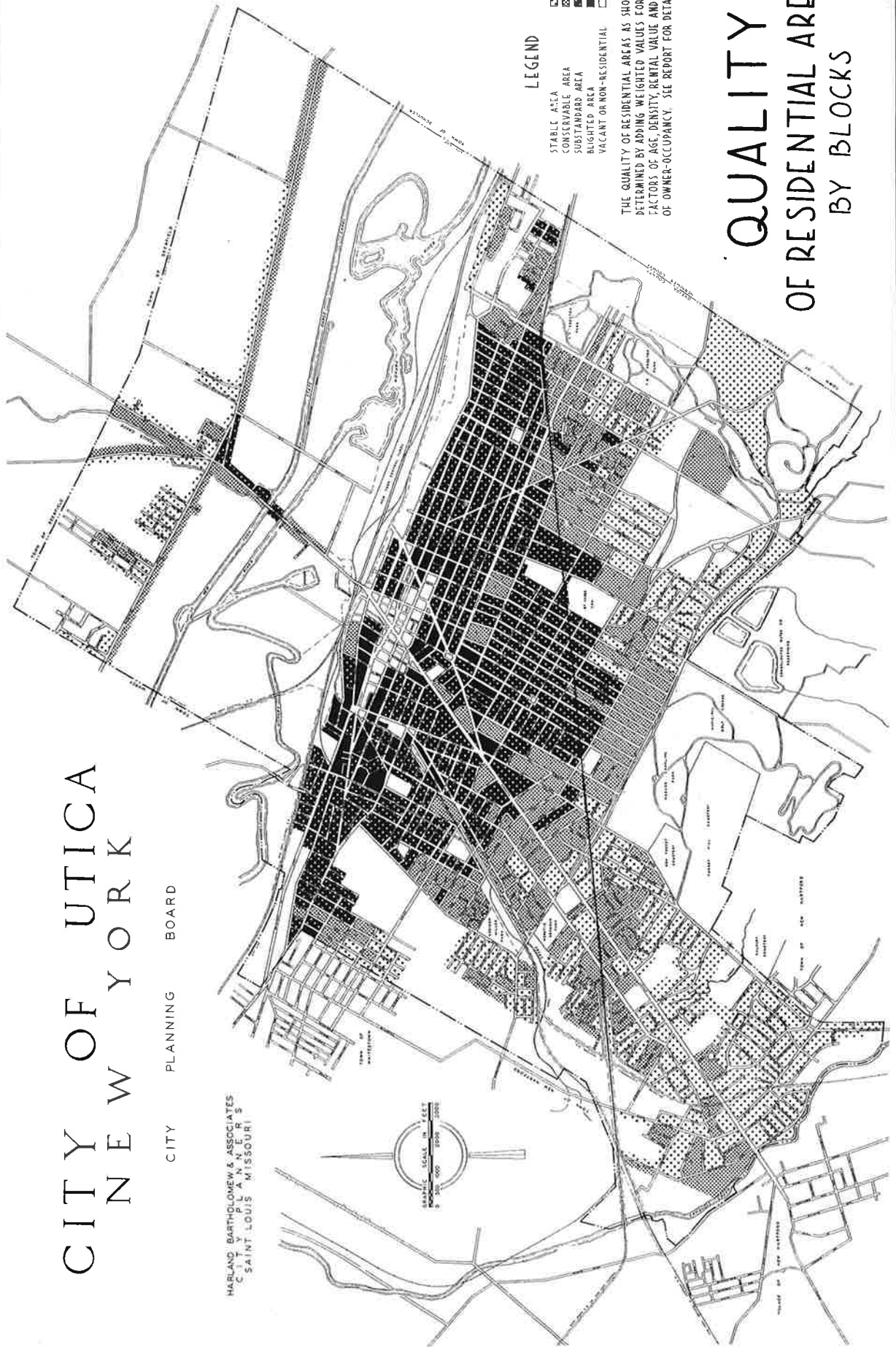
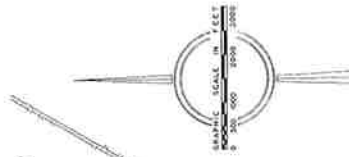
Blighted Areas

As used in this study of residential quality, blighted areas are those in which there is the coincidence of old age

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LEGEND

- STABLE AREA
- CONSERVABLE AREA
- SUBSTANDARD AREA
- BLIGHTED AREA
- VACANT OR NON-RESIDENTIAL

THE QUALITY OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS AS SHOWN WAS DETERMINED BY ADDING WEIGHTED VALUES FOR THE FOUR FACTORS OF AGE, DENSITY, RENTAL VALUE AND EXTENT OF OWNER-OCCUPANCY. SEE REPORT FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

QUALITY OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS BY BLOCKS

of dwellings, excessive density, low rentals and a low percentage of owner-occupancy. These conditions indicate residential conditions which are detrimental to the health, safety, morality and welfare of the occupants.

This study of quality points to a concentration of blight in the blocks lying between the O & W, and D. L. & W. Railroads bounded by Schuyler Street on the west to Court Street on the south; and from Whitesboro Street to Columbia Street east of Fay Street. Another area showing a concentration of blight lies adjacent to Second Street and Third Avenue between Mary and Catherine Streets. Several blocks at Oneida Square show the characteristics of blight and others are on the verge of being blighted. It is estimated that 8,700 Uticans live in 54 blocks which are predominantly blighted.

The treatment recommended for Utica's blighted area is as follows:

- (a) Apply standards for habitable dwellings as the minimum which will reasonably provide for the protection of public health, safety, morality and the general welfare.
- (b) Make a detailed survey of each blighted area dwelling, to evaluate basic deficiencies in facilities, maintenance and occupancy as described in the minimum housing standards.
- (c) Upon determination by the building inspector that a dwelling does not conform with minimum standards, the owner is notified of the basic deficiencies and allowed a reasonable time in which to remedy the conditions specified. If a dwelling structure is found to be unsafe and dangerous to the lives of persons, and if the cost of repairs is prohibitive, the building inspector shall condemn the structure and require its removal.

Substandard Areas

Substandard residential areas are those in which the old age of structures, density of families per acre, below average rental value, and low percentage of owner-occupancy combine to produce unsatisfactory residential conditions.

In the city of Utica, 336 of the 791 blocks show substandard residential conditions. This represents 42.5 per cent of all the blocks. Even more serious is the fact that 57,500 of Utica's people live in the substandard blocks.

Certain corrective measures must be taken to prevent or retard further deterioration of existing areas of substandard housing. These corrective measures concern individual dwellings and neighborhood environment.

The first is to apply minimum housing standards which will correct, or cause the removal of, individual structures which are found to be unsafe and dangerous and thereby constitute a center for the growth of blight.

Next, is to apply zoning regulations zealously in order to eventually remove non-conforming uses from residential neighborhoods and to prevent introduction of new ones.

Another corrective measure is to establish a system of Major Streets which will channel traffic on certain streets which are designed for the purpose; and deter use of streets within neighborhoods for any but local traffic.

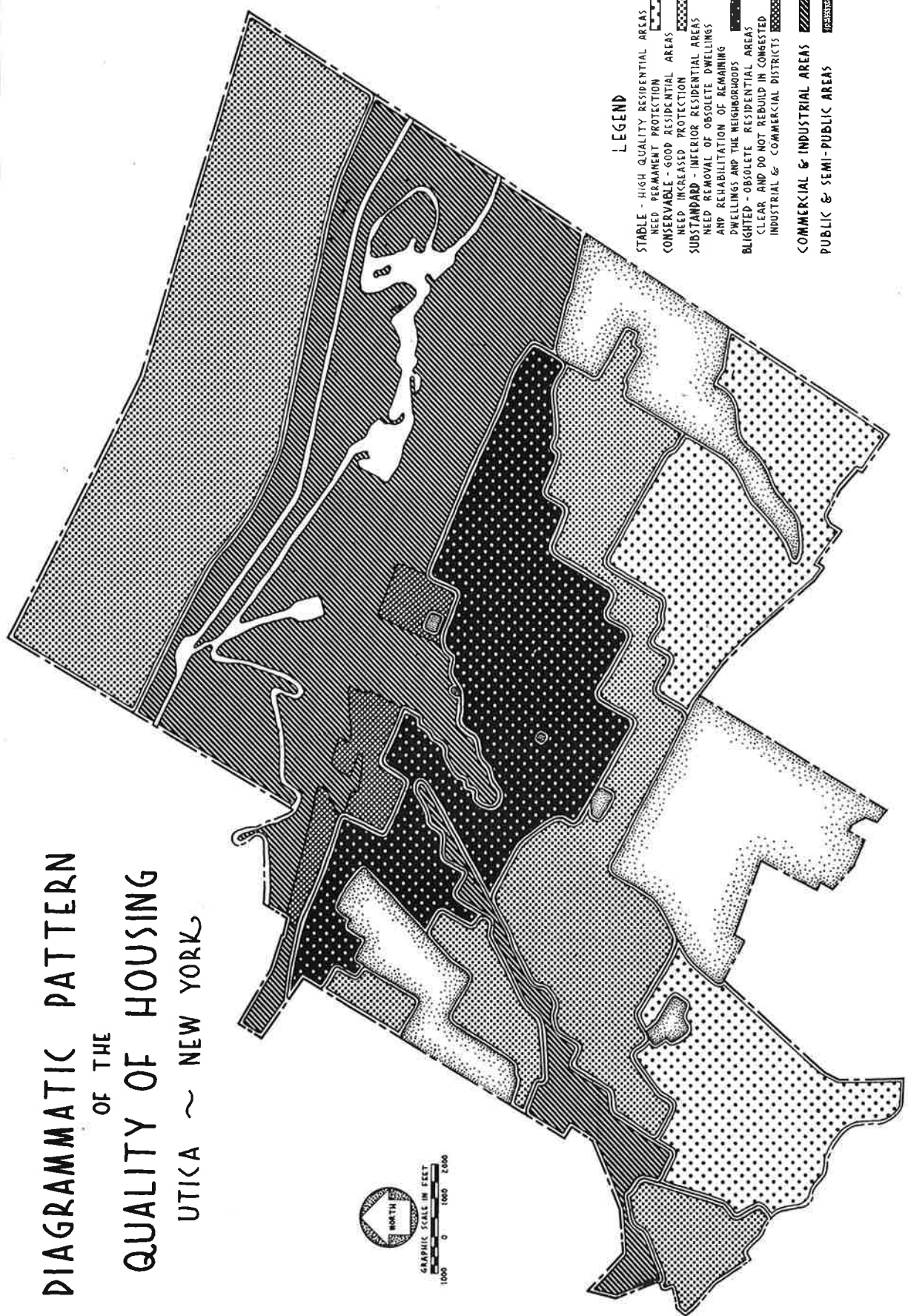
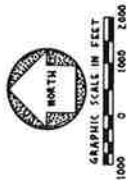
Neighborhood improvements such as parks, playgrounds, modern public schools and shopping centers are also important elements in improving and stabilizing a residential neighborhood.

In spite of corrective measures outlined above, some portions of the substandard residential areas must be considered for redevelopment at an early date. The location and extent of redevelopment necessary will be shown by the classification of residential structures as proposed in the minimum housing standards. An example of redevelopment of a six-block area in Utica is shown in a later section of this report.

Conservable Areas

Those areas in which the major portion of the housing is of medium age, where there is average density, and where

DIAGMMATIC PATTERN
 OF THE
 QUALITY OF HOUSING
 UTICA ~ NEW YORK



LEGEND

- STABLE - HIGH QUALITY RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- NEED PERMANENT PROTECTION
- CONSERVABLE - GOOD RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- NEED INCREASED PROTECTION
- SUBSTANDARD - INFERIOR RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- NEED REMOVAL OF OBSOLETE DWELLINGS AND REHABILITATION OF REMAINING DWELLINGS AND THE NEIGHBORHOODS
- BLIGHTED - OBSOLETE RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- CLEAR AND DO NOT REBUILD IN CONGESTED INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS
- COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL AREAS
- PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC AREAS

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rentals and owner-occupancy are above average are indicated as needing conservation. Definite measures should be taken to protect and maintain these areas which are located, in general, immediately adjacent to the West Shore Railroad from East to South Utica, and in scattered areas in West and North Utica. A total of 247 of the city's 791 residential blocks are included in the conservable area.

Unified neighborhood action is suggested to prevent deterioration of these areas for they are fertile ground for the infiltration of substandard conditions. Such conditions may take the form of increasing densities by conversion of existing structures to provide additional dwellings, improper continuation or introduction of non-conforming uses, or neglect of maintenance of properties to the extent that they become a nuisance.

Minimum housing standards should be applied to eradicate any spots which indicate substandard conditions, zoning regulations should be carefully followed, and residential areas should be relieved of traffic congestion, hazards and noise by designation of major streets for through traffic and minor streets for local traffic.

Stable Areas

Those districts in which the major portion of the dwellings are of good quality and of high value for residential purposes, and which may be expected to give many more years of use are referred to in this study as Stable Areas. They are concentrated in South Utica, in East Utica near the Parkway, and in small portions of North and West Utica. Single-family dwellings predominate in the Stable residential areas. A total of 154 blocks out of the 791 in Utica are included in this group.

Measures suggested for the preservation of the good quality of stable residential areas include strict enforcement of the zoning regulations in regard to uses and heights permitted and minimum areas required. There are a few local

areas of very poor quality in the stable areas which should be examined and required to conform with minimum housing standards. In addition, traffic congestion and hazards should be prevented by designation of major streets for through traffic, thus reserving the local streets for local traffic. This kind of street pattern is, in fact, partly responsible for these better neighborhoods, for the newer subdivisions have been designed generally to provide collector and local streets.

Summary of Residential Quality

The Diagrammatic Pattern of Residential Quality on Plate Number 38 shows that Utica has a comparatively small blighted residential area, but a large area of substandard residential development. The band of good residential area suitable for conservation is an important part of Utica's housing resources and needs increased protection to prevent extension of the adjacent substandard conditions. The residential areas of high quality are in the newest and most remote portions of the city.

Measures for treatment of each type of residential quality have been discussed in preceding paragraphs, and include application of minimum housing standards, zoning regulations and development of a major street system. In addition to use of these technical and administrative processes, citizen group action through Neighborhood Improvement Associations can be effective in protection of areas of good residential quality. An individual's efforts to preserve and enhance the character of his neighborhood may be ineffective, whereas organized group action may improve neighborhood appearance, safety and stability.

(B) PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

Protective Measures and Minimum Standards

The City Plan and Zoning. Utica has available several effective measures for improving and maintaining the quality of housing. One of the most comprehensive of these measures is the new City Plan. Its stated objective is to guide the orderly and efficient growth of the community.