

VIII -- PUBLIC BUILDINGS

# CITY OF UTICA NEW YORK

CITY PLANNING BOARD

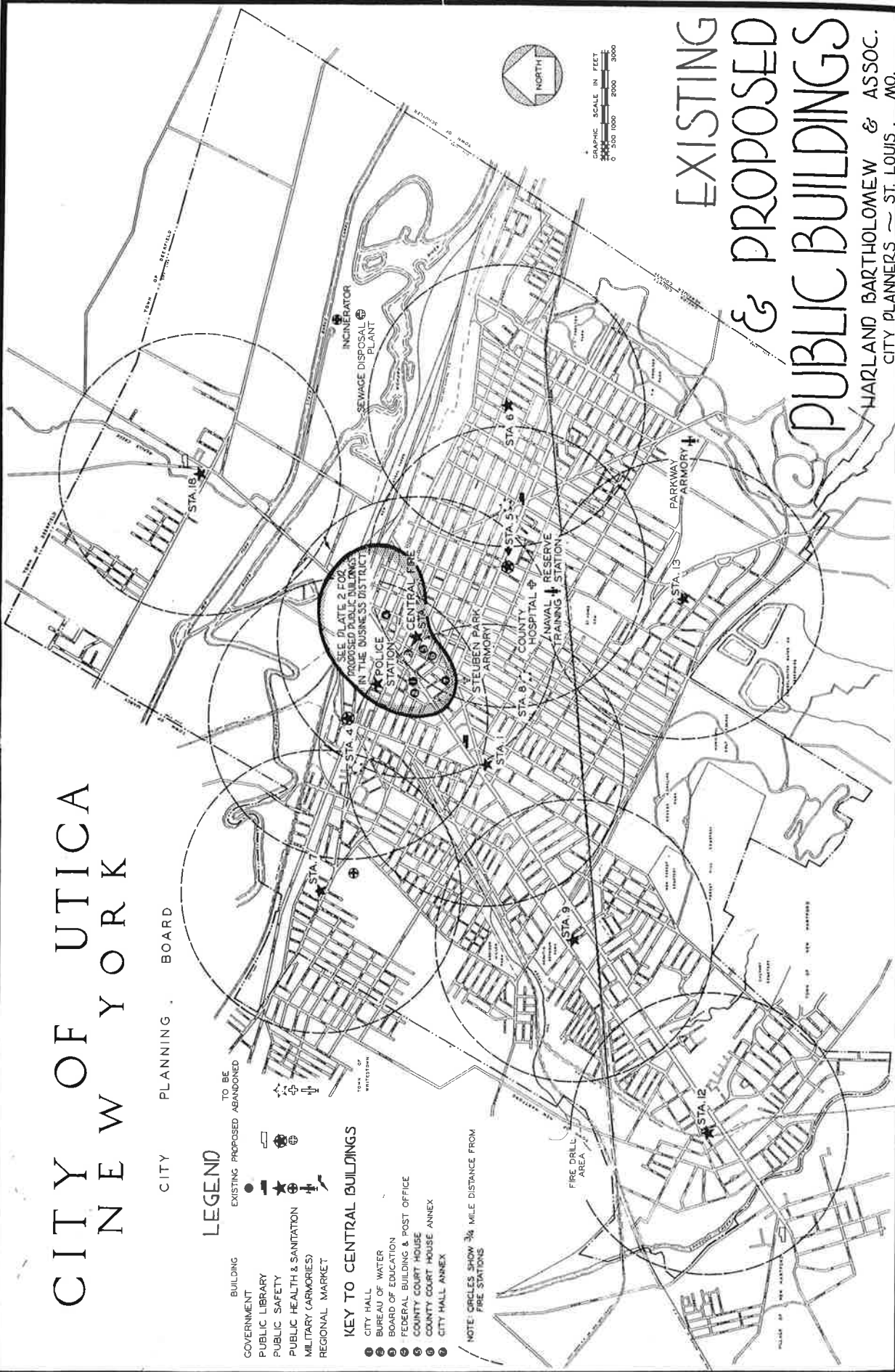
## LEGEND

- TO BE  
EXISTING PROPOSED ABANDONED
- BUILDING
  - GOVERNMENT
  - PUBLIC LIBRARY
  - PUBLIC SAFETY
  - PUBLIC HEALTH & SANITATION
  - MILITARY (ARMORIES)
  - REGIONAL MARKET

## KEY TO CENTRAL BUILDINGS

- CITY HALL
- BUREAU OF WATER
- BOARD OF EDUCATION
- FEDERAL BUILDING & POST OFFICE
- COUNTY COURT HOUSE
- COUNTY COURT HOUSE ANNEX
- CITY HALL ANNEX

NOTE: CIRCLES SHOW 3/4 MILE DISTANCE FROM FIRE STATIONS



# EXISTING & PROPOSED PUBLIC BUILDINGS

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## PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Several new public and semi-public buildings will be necessary in Utica in the immediate future. The grouping of such buildings as the City Hall, School Administration Office, County Court House, Police and Fire Headquarters, public auditorium and sports center into a harmonious civic center is not only architecturally desirable but financially sound and more efficient in public administration. Lack of such grouping in a dignified manner and in a convenient location is an outstanding example of the folly of unplanned and uncoordinated city growth.

The buildings of government - municipal, county, state and federal - which constitute the architectural elements of a civic center should be given a good central location and all of the additional emphasis which good design can offer. Not only do the public buildings belong together, but each gains importance and dignity by the proximity of the others and by spacious, well designed and well maintained grounds. Collectively, they can make the city more pride worthy.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the existing and future public building needs for Utica.

### (A) PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Existing and proposed public buildings in Utica are indicated on Plate Number 53. Many of the public buildings now in use are well located and the sites can be used for new buildings when the need for replacement develops. In some cases, buildings or sites should be abandoned in favor of more advantageous locations as Utica Looks Ahead to growth and progress.

The public buildings of the community include those serving neighborhoods, and those near the center of the city serving the entire community. Schools are the most important of the neighborhood buildings and a previous chapter stressed their significance as neighborhood centers and neighborhood playgrounds.

Other public buildings outside of the central business district are libraries, fire stations, armories and the general hospital.

### Utica Public Library and Branches

Plate number 53 shows the location of the main Utica Public Library and the East Utica Branch facing Albany Square at Kossuth, Albany and Lansing Streets. Almost all of the 92,000 residents of the city who live between the River Flats and the Parkway are within one mile of either the main library or the branch library. The twelve thousand Uticans who live south of the Parkway and Burrstone Road, and the approximately 2500 who live in North Utica are beyond the desirable mile distance from regular library service. Population estimates for 1970 for these two sections of the city indicate 10,000 or more may be expected in North Utica and 15,000 may be expected in South Utica. In addition, some 10,000 persons who live in the Town and Village of New Hartford are present or potential library users, thus making a library population in South Utica and vicinity of 25,000 or more.

It is recommended that the services provided by the Utica Public Library be expanded for residents of the City of Utica and of the region or County by the following steps.

#### Branch Libraries

It is recommended that three additional branch libraries should be established. One of these branches should be located in the central business district to make library service more readily available to shoppers, to businessmen, and to bus passengers who transfer downtown.

The downtown branch library should be located as close to the Busy Corner as possible. It should be designed for library purposes and should have attractive window space in which to display book collections of current interest so as to stimulate library use. It should provide "live" reference material for business men and women, and a good stock of periodicals. It should also serve as a pickup and return

station for books in the main library stock.

It is suggested that the increasing need for library service in North Utica be kept in mind, and that the present deposit station service be expanded to full branch library service when the increase in population and use indicate the need.

Another branch library is suggested to serve the people of South Utica and vicinity. The recommended location is in New Hartford on the present elementary school site or at the village park. Location of a branch outside of the City of Utica must be contingent upon participation by the Village and County in a regional library service. If this participation cannot be secured, a branch library at the Uptown area should be considered. Initiation of a city-village-county branch library service in New Hartford would open the way also for expansion of library services throughout the Utica urban area.

There are two public libraries outside of Utica, but within the present six-mile service radius. One is the Dunham Public Library in Whitesboro. A village library was started in 1940 in New York Mills.

It is apparent, therefore, that library services in Utica's urban fringe are being provided in a variety of ways - by complete dependence upon Utica's Public Library in the New Hartford area, and by established, tax-supported community libraries in Whitesboro and New York Mills.

It is recommended, therefore, that the Utica Public Library be the center for a regional library service to provide increased services for the people of Utica, to strengthen the two existing public libraries in the urban fringe, and to encourage development of either a branch or a new public library in New Hartford. The libraries in the small communities might be federated with the Utica Public Library to supply a wider range of books and reference material than is possible in a small local library.

## Fire Stations

This section deals primarily with the appropriate location of fire stations throughout the city.

The Location of fire stations is based primarily upon the character of districts to be protected and upon the need for speed and dependability in answering fire alarms. Narrow streets and traffic congestion can be important adverse factors.

Accepted standards for the spacing of fire stations recommend that the maximum distance for any part of a city from a pumper and ladder company should be as follows:

<u>District</u>	<u>Pumper Company</u>	<u>Ladder Company</u>
High Value	3/4 mile	1 mile
Residential	1 1/2 miles	2 miles
Sparse residential	3 miles	3 miles

Plate number 53 shows the location of the eleven existing fire stations.

The Central Fire Station on Elizabeth Street is a three story fire proof structure which was built in 1911. Its location is satisfactory from the standpoint of fire protection, and the structure is also satisfactory as a public building in the proposed civic center.

Fire Station Number One, located on Park Avenue at Oneida Square, is approximately fifty years old. Its location is generally satisfactory, for access in almost any direction is provided, and it is well situated in relation to other stations. Adequate facilities for the training program should be developed at some other location where sufficient space is available. A portion of the Rhoads Hospital site is recommended for this phase of fire prevention and protection education.

Fire Station Number Four is located at the western end of Lafayette Street at Whitesboro Street. The building needs to be rebuilt, and the fire chief has so recommended. Due to abandonment in recent years of the station on Washington Street, Station Four should be rebuilt closer to the central business district. The location here recommended is at Oriskany Square on the north side of Whitesboro Street.

Fire Station Number Five, located at Albany and Blandina Streets should be replaced by a modern building properly equipped to meet service requirements. The present location of the station on Albany Street, has advantages for quick access northwest and southeast. It is recommended, however, that the station be relocated to the corner of Mohawk and Rutger Streets.

Fire Station Number Six, on Bleecker Street at Wetmore, is well located and no change is recommended.

Fire Station Number Seven is located on Whitesboro Street between the Highlands area and the State Hospital. No change is recommended.

Fire Station Number Eight, located on Eagle Street at Neilson, is in the Cornhill residential neighborhood. It is recommended that when the Station becomes obsolete it should be abandoned. Truck Company 5 could then be consolidated with Engine Company 5 at the new location on Rutger and Mohawk Streets.

Fire Station Number Nine is located at 29 Shepherd Place and Sunset Avenue. It is one of the newer stations, being 33 years old. Its location is satisfactory and no capital improvements are necessary at this time.

Fire Station Number Ten, located at Deerfield Corners, is the one station providing fire protection services for North Utica. The importance of securing additional overhead crossings to North Utica at the earliest possible date is highlighted by the risks presently taken by depending upon one fire station in all of North Utica if an accident should close the overhead bridge.

Fire Station Number Twelve, located at the corner of Sunset and Woodlawn Avenues, is a modern and attractive neighborhood station now 20 years old. Its location is satisfactory with one exception. The DL & W grade crossing over Genesee Street introduces a serious potential impediment

to speed and dependability in answering fire alarms south and west of the railroad. For this reason, an underpass is recommended to connect Sunset Avenue with Hartford Place, thereby providing alternate access to areas now separated by the DL & W Railroad.

Fire Station Number Thirteen is located at 1502 Madison Avenue, near Sherman Drive. Its location is satisfactory to adequately serve the growing southeastern section of Utica.

The location of fire stations as proposed is shown on Table 6.

Table 6

PROPOSED LOCATIONS OF FIRE STATIONS AND COMPANIES

<u>Station No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Companies</u>
Central (inc. Fire Alarm Hdqtrs.)	235 Elizabeth St.	Engine Co. 2 Truck Co. 2 Water Tower
1	1217 Park Avenue	Engine Co. 1 Salvage Co. 2
4	Oriskany Circle *	Engine Co. 4 Truck Co. 1
5	Mohawk & Rutger Sts. *	Engine Co. 5 Truck Co. 5
6	1320 Bleecker St.	Engine Co. 6 Truck Co. 3
7	1622 Whitesboro St.	Engine Co. 7
9	29 Shepherd Place	Engine Co. 9 Truck Co. 4
10	401 Trenton Ave.	Engine Co. 10
12	15 Woodlawn Ave.	Engine Co. 12
13	1502 Madison Ave.	Engine Co. 13

\* New Location

(B) PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVING THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

Armories

Utica has three armories within its boundaries, namely the armory at Steuben Park, the Parkway Armory near Albany Street, and the new Naval Reserve Training Center on Mohawk Street near Eagle.

Due to the fact that the proposed use of the Steuben Park Armory is for several anti-aircraft battalions involving many units of heavy equipment, and that this State Guard training program is unrelated to the central business district except for the convenience of a central location for the five hundred or so members of the guard enrolled for training at this armory, it is recommended that full consideration be given to building the proposed armory on a site outside of the congested area. Two locations are suggested for consideration.

The first location is the present 25.7-acre Parkway Armory site. If after full consideration, the conclusion is reached that the Parkway Armory site is not suitable for all State Guard units, then it is recommended the proposed armory be included in the development of the Rhoads Hospital site.

Oneida County Hospital

The County Hospital is located at South and Mohawk Streets. The plant is old and obsolete, and it seems unlikely that it will be rebuilt at either City or County expense. It is recommended that if and when the hospital use is abandoned, the site be retained by the city for use as a playground for the Conkling School. The Hospital site contains about four acres. The total area of the entire Conkling School site is only 2 3/4 acres, whereas it should be about 15 acres. When it becomes necessary and possible to rebuild Conkling School, consideration should be given to building it on the present Hospital site, and to increasing the site by acquisition of adjoining property on the west.

## Existing Government Buildings

### Municipal Buildings

City Hall. Although the City Hall has architectural merit, its age and type of construction are such that necessary modernization of the building is impractical. The location of a public building on Utica's main shopping street is undesirable for it breaks the continuity of the shopping district.

It is recommended that a modern, fireproof city hall be built at an early date, and that it be included in the civic center as proposed in subsequent paragraphs of this chapter.

The Board of Water Supply headquarters, located at 712 Washington Street was built in 1915 and is fireproof. It is substantial, has off-street parking space, and no change in location or general facilities is proposed at this time.

The Police Headquarters and City Court building, located at 413 Oriskany Street, W., was built in 1927. No change in location is proposed during the normal lifetime of the present building.

The City Garage is located on the lot adjoining Police Headquarters. It is well located in relation to major streets and the business district.

School Administration Office. This building, located at 13 Elizabeth Street, is obsolete, and a new school administration building is needed. The new building should be included in the proposed civic center group which is described more fully in later paragraphs. The present site of the school administration building has been recommended for use by a Municipal Parking Authority for a public garage.

Boys Trade School, located at the corner of Elizabeth and Charlotte Streets is a 103-year old non-fireproof structure. It is obsolete and should be razed at the earliest possible date. The building site, together with the present school administration site is recommended for use by a Municipal Parking Authority for a public garage.

The Public Comfort Station, located at 9 Elizabeth Street should be combined with the proposed public garage on the two adjoining lots.

The East Utica Public Bath House, located at 654 Jay Street was built in 1913 and the building is of fireproof construction. This property was acquired by gift.

#### County Buildings

The County Court House is a fireproof building and was built in 1908, and within the last few years it became necessary to provide additional space by purchase of the building at Mary Street and Charlotte which now serves as the Court House Annex.

#### State Offices

The various state government and service offices are widely scattered throughout Utica and vicinity.

For reasons of economy, efficiency and convenience of operation there are advantages in consolidating the various state offices serving Utica and vicinity in a single office building in the proposed civic center.

#### Federal Building

The Federal Building occupies the entire block bounded by Broad, John, Catherine and Franklin Streets. It is comparatively new and should continue to serve the community for many years. It is well located in relation to railroad facilities and access by automobile and bus. It is poorly located in relation to most offices and stores in the shopping district, and its location affords no opportunity to include it in the proposed civic center. It is possible that in the redevelopment of Baggs Square and vicinity in connection with a new crossing over the New York Central Railroad and the Mohawk River the setting of the Federal Building may be recognized and improved in harmony with the monumental character of the building.



### (C) PROPOSED PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Several new public buildings are needed in Utica. New public buildings of general city-wide significance which may reasonably be built within the span of this comprehensive plan include:

1. City Hall
2. School Administration Office
3. Municipal Auditorium
4. Business Branch Library

In order to realize a full return in efficiency, convenience and aesthetic value, the buildings of municipal, county, state and federal government should be well designed individually, and so related to each other as to create an attractive, unified and dignified civic center.

It is recommended that these buildings be included in a civic center on Elizabeth Street, together with the existing Oneida County Court House, Central Fire Station, Oneida County Historical Museum and other public and semi-public buildings.

#### Suggested Civic Center Group

Plate 54 shows a suggested development of public buildings and open spaces as a civic center group on Elizabeth Street.

The location was selected after consideration of several other sites, including the Steuben Park area, Charlotte Street between Steuben Park and Elizabeth Street, and the Oriskany Street, East, area which has been suggested for redevelopment.

The Elizabeth Street area was selected because several important public and semi-public buildings already exist in the area; because of its adjacency to the central business district, being only one block from Genesee Street and parallel with Bleecker Street; being easily accessible by major streets such as Genesee, John and Park Avenue; being easily accessible by mass transportation as proposed in the Transit Report; and being well located in relation to existing and proposed parking facilities.

It is proposed that the properties in the Court House block, (#12) bounded by Elizabeth, Charlotte and Mary Streets, be acquired, that the new City Hall be built on the eastern portion of the block, and that the entire block be planned and developed to achieve a unity and dignity for these two important municipal buildings.

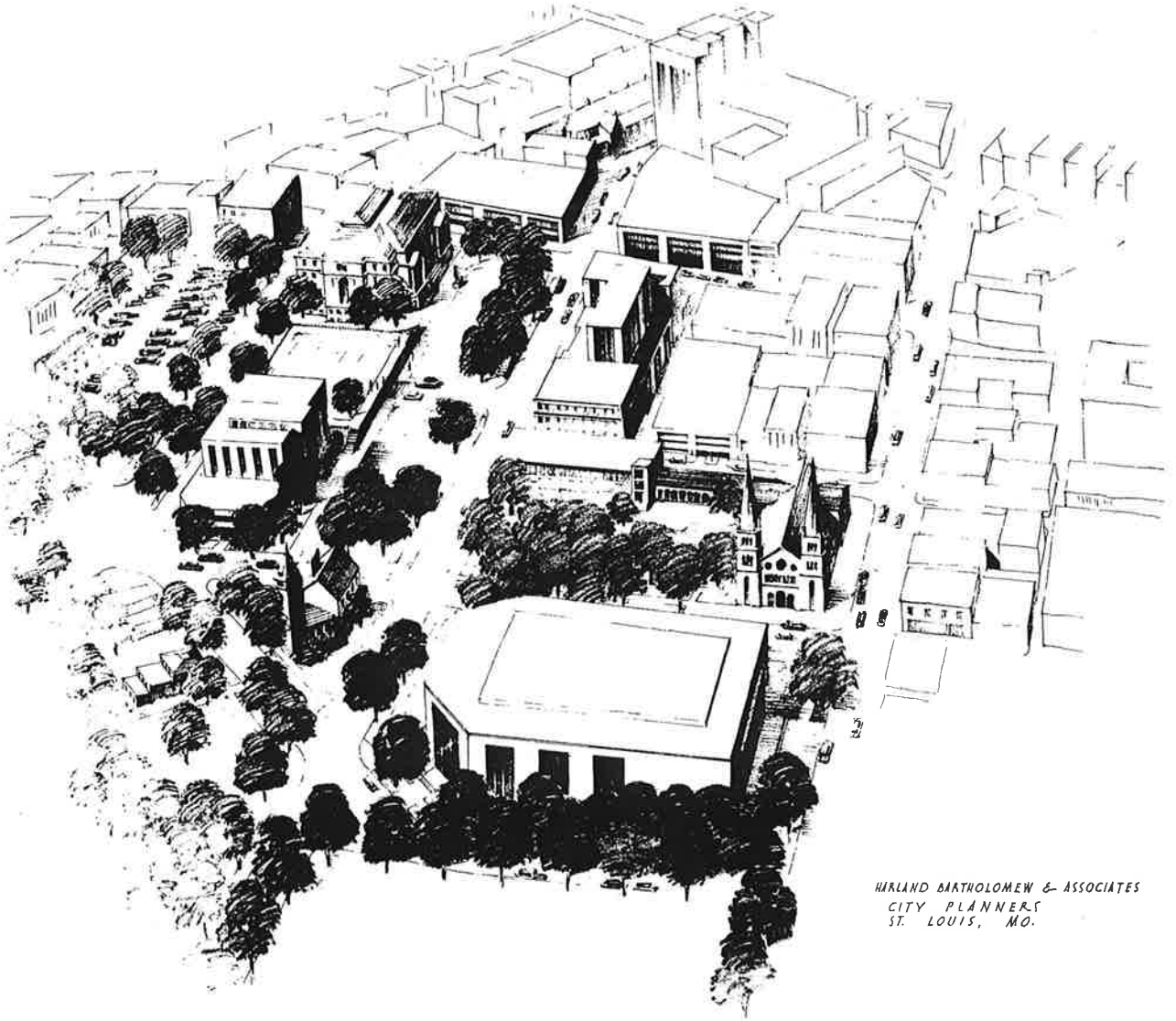
Block No. 11 is bounded by Elizabeth, Academy, Bleecker and John Streets. It is recommended that the entire block be acquired and that a municipal auditorium be developed thereon.

Block No. 10 is bounded by Elizabeth, John, Bleecker and Burnet Streets. The outstanding land use in this block is St. John's Catholic Church, Parish House and Utica Catholic Academy.

Although it is outside the scope of this report to study parochial and private schools, the recommendation is made in connection with the civic center plan that this entire block be acquired by St. John's Church and Utica Catholic Academy, that an adequate school building be developed, and that the buildings and grounds be developed in harmony with the importance and dignity of other buildings and areas included in the civic center.

Block No. 9 is bounded by Elizabeth, Burnet, Post and Charlotte Streets and includes the Central Fire Station site.

In order to achieve unity in the development of a Civic Center along Elizabeth Street it will be necessary to control both sides of the street within the area under consideration. For this reason, it is proposed that the commercial properties in this block be acquired and improved to conform with the general design of the civic center. It is suggested that the school administration offices, welfare and other state or federal offices and the business branch library be located in this block. Thus, school, city and county and state offices will be located close to each other.



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*The* Perspective Sketch of  
PUBLIC BUILDINGS GROUP  
UTICA NEW YORK

Off-street parking facilities for use in conjunction with the Civic Center may be provided in a number of ways. Four public parking garages and lots previously proposed on the perimeter of this area will meet some of the need and should be considered as part of the public buildings group for design, development and public service purposes. In the design of the public building group, full advantage should be taken of opportunities for basement parking. The proposed Oriskany Street (E) redevelopment includes parking space in the plaza for 175 cars and is only one to three blocks north from the Civic Center.

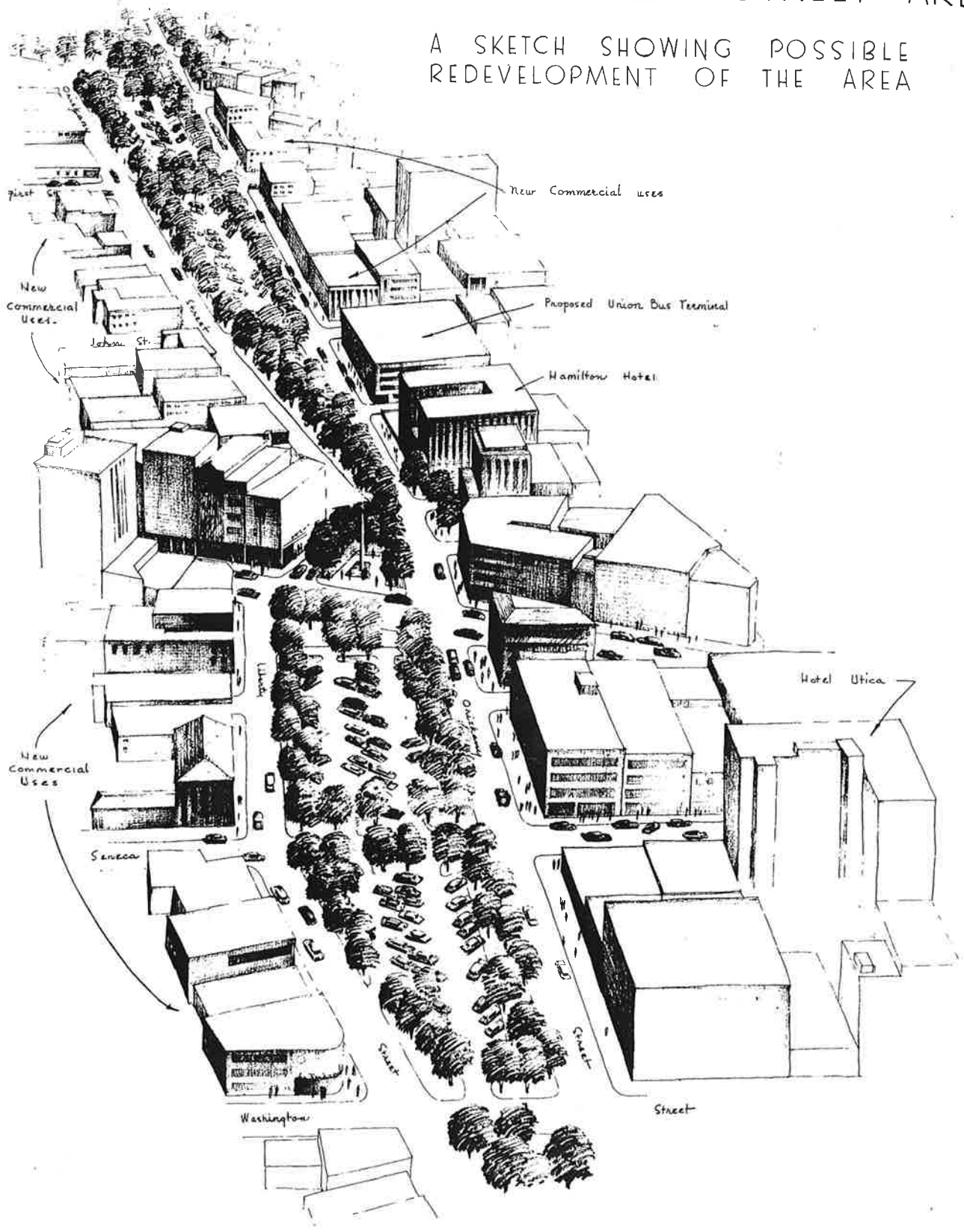
It is proposed that additional off-street parking space be provided at the south side of the Civic Center by acquiring and developing those lots on the northerly side of Block 15 on Mary Street.

The first cost of acquiring sites for Utica's public buildings in a civic center will probably not exceed the common haphazard method of providing for each building separately as necessity compels and as opportunity provides. The final cost will surely be less because it will be planned in advance. Property values in the vicinity of the Civic Center will be increased and stabilized, and other locations of the city will be available for their proper uses, free from the adverse effects of scattered, misplaced public buildings. Investigation should be made of the possibility of heating the various public buildings from one central plant for greater efficiency of operation and space, and reduction of smoke and dirt.

Civic centers are desirably built around public squares or plazas. Such a location does not seem to be feasible in Utica. It seems to be feasible, however, to develop an attractive and dignified civic center group along Elizabeth Street as shown on Plate 54. Interesting views of the building group, open spaces and adjacent landmarks

# ORISKANY, LIBERTY & JAY STREET AREA

A SKETCH SHOWING POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA



2EA

will be secured looking east from Genesee Street encompassing Grace Church, The Court House, the proposed City Hall, and the Oneida County Historical Society building. Looking westward from the vicinity of Chancellor Square, the view will include the proposed municipal auditorium, Historical Society Building, proposed City Hall, Court House, Grace Church and First National Bank Building. A perspective sketch showing this latter view is presented in Plate 55. As this sketch shows, each structure gains importance and beauty from the others, and collectively they will make the city more pride worthy.

Plate 56 is a perspective sketch showing possible redevelopment of the Oriskany, Liberty and Jay Street area. This redevelopment was fully described in the chapter on Major Streets and Parking.